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56th year of publication

Ontario government holds consultations on
education tax credit

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — The Ontario government has just completed a round of consultations about the new Equity in Education Tax Credit, which offers a tax break to families who send children to independent Christian schools. Unlike the hearings which took place several months ago, these consultations involved individuals and agencies directly impacted by the tax credit, such as the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) and the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC). Both of those agencies were impressed with the consultation process.

The government talks were technical discussions to develop regulations to establish eligibility for the new tax credit, which became law in June. They were led by Ernie Hardeman, MPP for Oxford, Ont., and Parliamentary Assistant to Finance Minister Jim

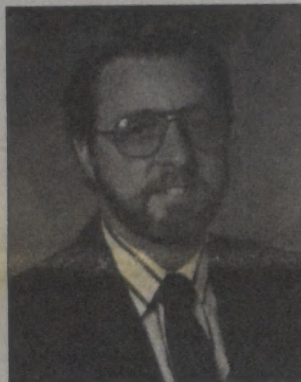
Flaherty, from Sept. 10 to 13 in Toronto. The government also accepted written submissions until Sept. 28.

Input from parents,
educators

"We want to get input from parents, educators and administrators about the structure and content of any regulations for the tax credit that may be necessary," said Hardeman in a news release.

The government is still planning to phase in the credit over a five-year period, starting with the 2002 tax year. In the first year, the maximum value of the credit will be \$700 for each eligible child, and this will rise to \$3,500 when the credit is fully implemented in 2006.

To help facilitate the consultations, Ontario's Ministry of Finance distributed a discussion paper, which outlined what the government wants to accomplish



CC FILE

John Vanasselt of OACS.

with the credit, and asked interested groups some questions such as:

- How should the tax credit be calculated in order to reflect the availability of the charitable tax credit?

- What requirements or criteria

should independent schools have to meet to be eligible for the tax credit?

- Should eligible schools be required to issue an annual disclosure statement that outlines their academic program?

- Should the taxpayer claiming the credit have some relationship to the child, e.g. a parent, legal guardian or other family member?

More information from
schools

John Vanasselt, director of communications for OACS, called the consultations "a necessary process." The government wants to "make sure all players have the opportunity to have a say."

Vanasselt, who took part in the talks, says one key issue for OACS was "the relationship of this tax credit to the federal charitable donation [credit]."

On the issue of disclosure statements, he said, "I think it's

appropriate to ask schools to provide information about their programs." He expects OACS's schools to provide "more reporting, more public information" in the future. "Schools would do well to track the success of their students."

Looking at who could claim the tax credit, Vanasselt stated, "My own viewpoint is any individual who pays for a child's education should be able to claim that." This could include a grandparent or a friend of a family, he said.

Parents and administrators from OACS have expressed strong support for the government's technical discussions around the implementation of the tax credit, reported Vanasselt. Tony Kamphuis, a parent and teacher in an OACS school who took part in the discussions, noted that "the three MPPs were very clear that the desire here is to see the benefit of the

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Government plans to regulate surrogacy, new reproductive technologies

Alan Doerksen

OTTAWA — Health Minister Allan Rock plans to introduce legislation to ban human cloning and regulate surrogacy. Several pro-life groups welcome these plans, but would like to see the government go further than it plans to go — and completely ban surrogacy. On the other hand, Canadian Alliance MP Keith Martin, a pro-choice Roman Catholic, has openly criticized the planned legislation as being unnecessary, saying that government should "butt out" of regulating surrogacy.

Surrogacy, in this case, refers to a woman agreeing to have a baby on behalf of another couple, by means of in vitro fertilization. Lately, stories have appeared in newspapers telling of American



COURTESY MONICA RODDIS

Monica Roddis

couples hiring Canadian women to bear their children, and get paid for it. At the same time, ethical problems are emerging, such as: what happens when a commissioned pregnancy doesn't turn out

as planned?

Monica Roddis, media liaison person for the Pro-Life Society of B.C. tells of one instance, in which a surrogate mother aborted her child when she had a falling-out with the parents of the child. In another case, one surrogate was expecting twins, and the parents asked her to abort one twin. Roddis points out that "the level of education and financial security of the [surrogate] mother is usually far less than the parents." Young women usually become surrogates for the money, she believes.

Government regulations

Last May, Rock presented draft legislation on assisted human reproduction to the Standing Committee on Health, and asked



PETER BIRRO

Health Minister Allan Rock

committee members to provide him with a report on the draft legislation by the end of next January.

"This draft legislation addresses something fundamental to

the lives of many Canadians — the desire to have children and build a family," said Rock at that time. "We want to make sure that reproductive technologies, which offer some women a better chance of having a child, are safe and that Canadians are able to make informed decisions about them."

Rock indicated the government's two primary objectives with the legislation: to ensure that Canadians using assisted human reproduction techniques do so without compromising their health and safety; and to ensure that promising research involving human reproductive materials takes place within a regulated environment.

The draft legislation would
See SURROGACY p. 2...

News

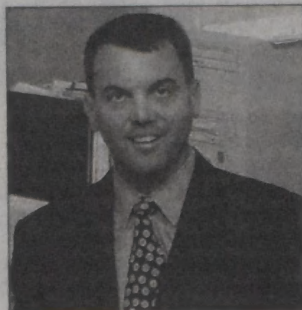
Agencies offer suggestions on how to regulate tax credit

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tax credit maximized for independent school parents," states an OACS press release.

OACS parents have communicated with government for more than four decades on the issue of school choice, suggesting that along with a strong public system, the educational landscape of Ontario would be improved and enhanced with the expansion of school choice. OACS also believes education reform would progress more quickly if the full implementation of the tax credit were effected immediately rather than through a long phase-in period.

No 'double-dipping'

Frank Luellau, Executive Director of CCCC, also took part in the government talks, and reported, "I think it's been a good consultative process." Basically, CCCC is satisfied with the tax credit. "We don't have any real concerns. It's a very good provision," asserted Luellau. But he



Tim Hudak

agrees with Vanasselt that care must be taken to make sure there is no conflict between this tax credit and the charitable tax credit. CCCC has submitted to the Ontario government ideas about how to keep the two tax credits distinct.

CCCC does not support the proposition that there should be any form of "double-dipping" with respect to the two tax credits, according to a press release. The agency plans to assist Christian

schools with the proper method of calculating the two tax credits once the final regulations have been released by the Ministry of Finance.

"We basically do not lobby the government for tax advantages," explained Luellau. "The area we get involved in is helping make fair application of a law that exists.... suggesting what would work best."

As to who should apply for the tax credit, Luellau said, "Clearly, the provision is there to provide the tax credit for the one who is paying." This could include friends or other family members besides parents, he suggested.

Although some have argued that the new tax credit could weaken Ontario's public school system, Luellau responded, "If the public school system is so weak that it's threatened by this, it's in far more trouble than people admit." Instead, this could be seen as a challenge to improve public education.

CCCC is a national umbrella

organization for Christian charities, which represents about three million taxpayers.

Cabinet will make rules

Now that the consultations are completed, Ontario's government will be examining the results, and making regulations. Tim Hudak, MPP for Erie-Lincoln and Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, will be among those involved with that process.

"It's the responsibility of Cabinet to create regulations to support the tax credit," Hudak told *Christian Courier*. "I'll see their advice and have my own say on that."

Hudak has been a longtime supporter of tax breaks for independent schools. "It's important for me to support my constituents," he said. "I have eight Christian schools in my riding. Secondly, I support the principle. Parents send their kids to independent schools, pay taxes to the public education system, and on top of that are paying tuition for their children. From

a fairness point of view, the tax credit was the right policy, and I'm very pleased." He calls the tax credit "some long overdue tax relief" and "a very exciting and historic change in the tax system."

Hudak notes, "My riding had the second most number of letters thanking the premier for the tax credit. I was very proud when I heard that news." His office received more than 1,000 related letters, e-mail messages and petitions, Hudak reports. Supporters of independent Christian schools presented their case "in a very professional and diplomatic manner," he observes. "They were gentlemen, and they brought evidence forward, which is a much better way of doing things than other groups with picket signs. They approached the issue quite well, and it's been demonstrated by the success." Commenting on the gradual introduction of the credit, Hudak explained, "This is very common when introducing a new tax change."

Surrogacy should be banned, say pro-life groups

... continued from page 1
prohibit these activities from taking place in Canada:

- Cloning of human beings;
- Germ-line genetic alteration (changing the genetic code such that the modification is passed on to descendants);
- Development of an embryo outside a woman's body beyond the accepted 14-day limit;
- Creation of embryos solely for research purposes;
- Creating an embryo from another embryo or fetus;
- Transplanting reproductive material from animals into humans;
- Use of human reproductive material previously transplanted into an animal;
- Gender preference (i.e. action taken to increase the probability of a particular sex);
- Sale and purchase of human embryos;
- Purchase, barter or exchange of human gametes (sperm or eggs);
- Commercial surrogacy arrangements.

Other activities such as in vitro fertilization and donor insemination would be allowed, but regulated. The draft legislation provides the authority to the Minister of Health to develop regulations to govern activities that are related to assisted human reproduction and research.

MP Keith Martin has already come out swinging against the

proposed legislation. He described it recently, in the *Globe and Mail*, as "Very paternalistic, arrogant and, in my view, it clearly is a place where government should butt out.... How can you criminalize someone trying to have a baby?"

Martin, who has worked as an emergency-room doctor, has stated that women should be allowed to rent out their wombs for a fee, without any involvement from government. "I don't think it's the place for the government to be legislating people's personal behavior and their reproductive capacities," he contended.

Not far enough

Mary Ellen Douglas, spokesperson for Campaign Life Coalition (CLC — a national pro-life agency based in Toronto), says Martin's recent statements are "consistent with the rest of his thinking. I know he's very pro-abortion.... What he says is very wrong."

Douglas feels the proposed legislation does not go far enough. CLC supports a ban on using human embryos for experimentation, she says. But she feels Health Minister Rock "very definitely wants to use those embryos left over from in vitro fertilization for experimentation."

"Human beings are human from the point of conception," she argues. But Douglas admits, "We



Mary Ellen Douglas

have a long way to go in convincing people this is a human being."

Douglas agrees that the government needs to regulate surrogacy "because of all the cases coming forward." But one objection she has to surrogacy is that children are treated as property, not as humans. Besides that, "there are a lot of babies destroyed," she says. In the in vitro process, usually one or more fertilized eggs are inserted into the womb of the mother-to-be. But other embryos are "poured down the drain," says Douglas. Surrogacy shows "a tremendous disrespect for life.... All of this diminishes our humanity."

CLC has been busy, especially during last summer, "trying to talk to as many MPs as possible" about surrogacy and stem-cell research, reports Douglas.

Monica Roddis asserts "as a group, we oppose in vitro fertiliza-

tion, which is very much a part of surrogacy." She believes that surrogacy should be completely banned. Like other pro-life groups, the Pro-Life Society of B.C. is concerned that embryos are not being treated as fully human, although they are. "I think children should be protected from the moment of conception."

Ethical barriers

"Most of us have sympathy for people who can't conceive a child of their own," says Roddis. "But there have to be moral and ethical barriers.... Too much harm comes [from] the practice of surrogacy. There isn't a child when the surrogacy arrangement is made. The best interests of the child are sometimes overlooked."

Roddis encourages people to express their views on the issue of surrogacy to Parliament. Christians need to examine the scientific side of reproductive technology and "compare that with ethics we hold as Christians," says Roddis.

June Scandiffio, chair of the board for the Right to Life Association of Toronto and Area, says she is glad about the proposed ban on cloning. But she is concerned that the legislation talks about "human reproductive materials rather

than embryos. That opens the door for stem-cell research."

Although the legislation would ban commercial payment for surrogacy, Scandiffio points out "women would be given compensation" — something she sees as "legalese" for allowing some sort of payment.

Scandiffio agrees with the government's concerns about health and safety connected with this area. One problem with donations of reproductive materials is that there has been no testing for HIV, she claims. "Women were becoming infected."

But she is concerned that the government is "not really concerned about the preborn child.... Once the genetic code is there, at the moment of conception, there should be protection.... My underlying concern is a total disregard for that life."

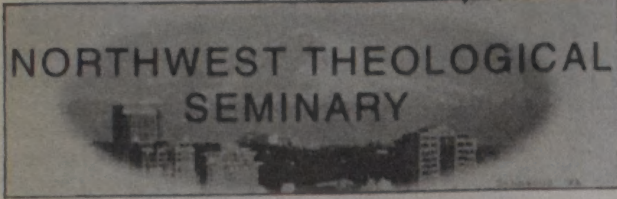
Although the government plans to ban creation of embryos solely for research, Scandiffio sees this as a "smokescreen," because the government would allow research "if we've got these embryos anyway."

Scandiffio is also concerned that the legislation refers to "women, rather than families" with issues such as surrogacy.

The technology for surrogacy "has been based on animal surrogacy," says Scandiffio. But now it is being applied to humans "without any question of whether it's ethical or legal."

News

New Reformed seminary opens in Washington



Alan Doerksen

LYNNWOOD, Wash. — A new Reformed seminary has opened in the state of Washington, and offered its first classes Sept. 4. Northwest Theological Seminary is based in Lynnwood, Wash., a suburb of Seattle, and is starting up by meeting in a local church, Lynnwood Orthodox Presbyterian.

The new seminary is "uniquely committed to Reformed Biblical theology, classical Reformed orthodoxy, and the apologetics of Cornelius Van Til," states Prof. James Dennison, Jr. in a press release. "The seminary seeks to train pastors in the treasures 'new and old' (Matt. 13:52) of God's inerrant word."

To begin with, the seminary has two professors: Dennison, who is Academic Dean and Professor of Church History and Biblical Theology; and Peter Vosteen, who is Professor of Homiletics, and also pastor of Lynnwood Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Ling Harrell will serve as adjunct instructor of Greek and as registrar.

Two degree programs

Northwest is offering two degree programs: Master of Divinity and Master of Religious Education.

According to Northwest's website (www.nwts.edu), the seminary's board hopes to have sufficient funds by 2002 to expand

the faculty. Despite the small staff, the full range of classes for the M.Div and M.R.S. programs will be presented in the first year.

"The primary purpose of Northwest Theological Seminary is the training of men for the gospel ministry through the Master of Divinity degree program," states the seminary's website. The MRS program is focused on "qualified lay persons who desire to increase their knowledge of Christ and His word."

In view of the financial needs, the board is also searching for a full time director of development in order to raise funds for the seminary, and hopes to hire a director this fall. The board is also considering plans for the August 2002 Continuing Education program (two weeks with special speakers on selected topics of interest to ministers and laypersons).

In August, the seminary held a Kerux Conference, which featured 16 speakers, most of whom spoke on aspects of biblical theology.

Kerux is the Greek word for "herald" or "proclaimer," and is also the name of a journal which Dennison edits.

Calvinistic tradition

According to Northwest's mission statement, organizing the seminary and getting it started was "the culmination of a concerted effort to bring a new Reformed theological seminary to the Pacific Northwest. The specific emphases of Northwest Seminary will be: biblical theology in the tradition of Geerhardus Vos; presuppositional apologetics in the tradition of Cornelius Van Til; and orthodox confessionalism in the classic Calvinistic tradition."

Northwest is requesting prayer and financial support and states, "One of God's means of grace is prayer. At NWTS we appreciate your prayers on our behalf, that the ministry of NWTS would honor God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Vosteen was ordained by the

United Presbyterian Church in North America (UPCNA) in the late 1950s, and served CRC congregations in Canada and the U.S. for 34 years. While pastor of the Lynnwood CRC, in Lynnwood, Wash., he became very concerned with the drift of the CRC denomination away from full commitment to the Reformed faith, states Northwest's website. Vosteen joined the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1994 and his consistory followed suit in 1995. Vosteen's recollections of the classrooms of Cornelius Van Til, Ned Stonehouse, John Murray and Meredith G. Kline are the basis of his life-long commitment to biblical theology and presuppositional apologetics.

Dennison is an ordained member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), and the editor of *Kerux: A Journal of Biblical-Theological Preaching*. His "awakening" to the Reformed faith came in 1960 while reading Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Opinion

Muslims and the West in the end times

Dr. Jan Jongeneel

The attack on New York and Washington D.C. was terrible. It was terrorism. It was also more than terrorism. Nothing is explained when only the term "terrorism" is used. Behind this attack we see indeed hidden a religious world view that needs to be exposed. In my opinion this attack is deeply rooted in Muslim apocalyptic thinking.

Christians are familiar with apocalyptic thinking (thinking about the end times). There were and still are Christians who take the Bible books of Daniel and Revelation in their hands to determine what will happen in the end times. In the course of history they have pointed to Nero, the Pope and also Saddam Hussein as the Antichrist.

Muslim end time thinking

There are, however, also groups of Muslims who are filled with this end time thinking. Their starting point is that nothing new can come after Mohammed and after the Koran: Islam is the final world religion and all peoples of the earth will be followers of Islam in the end of time. This has been determined by Allah.

In the Koran there are prophecies concerning the present as well as the future. They speak for example about "the animal from the

earth" (27:82), which is more or less comparable with the Antichrist in the Bible. Ali Akbar in his Islamic-world-wide distributed bestseller, published in Malaysia, *Israel and the Prophecies of the Koran* (1974) has explained these prophecies.

'Israel will be destroyed'

He does not view Israel as the chosen people of God, but as a people that do not follow Moses and has killed the prophets. Allah is merciful towards all, even towards Israel. He even gave Israel a second chance after the Babylonian captivity and now for a third chance in the state of Israel. But the people of Israel do not use even the third and final opportunity to repent. The people and the nation of Israel will be punished because of this hardening of heart. This does not yet happen because the state of Israel is propped up by the West. However, when the West has totally weakened Israel will be destroyed. Allah will not let Himself continue to be ridiculed by shameful Israel.

The West — according to Akbar's apocalyptic thinking — and in particular the U.S.A. is the Antichrist who pours out atheism, materialism and sensualism over the whole of humankind. The West leads humankind away from God and makes it immoral: see the sex

industry, economic imperialism, apartheid, etc. The worst sin of the Christian West is that it changed the prophetic message of Jesus — peace be upon him — into a doctrine of the sonship of God, of the Trinity, of reconciliation through atonement, etc. Christendom, through its doctrine of the Trinity has changed the pure doctrine of Jesus into tri-theism, meaning paganism. It is clear that no peace can be made with this Antichrist. Allah, in his time, and in his way, will deal in a definitive way with this Antichrist.

Apocalyptic framework

The above-named author has also mentioned the tragedies of our time and placed them into an apocalyptic framework. At the end of time the Antichrist will completely break loose and will attempt to devour everything in its way. Allah, of course, is more powerful than the Antichrist. Allah will, in his time, send the prophet Jesus to this earth to gather all the true believers (The Muslims) and to hide them in the mountains. Then he will cause a terrible illness to come upon the West that will devour all flesh (radio activity). The stench of the doomed Antichrist will be terrible. However, Allah will be merciful to all true believers. He will give abundant rain which will wash away all dirt. After that the earth

will be clean and populated only by believers.

The above-named influential book makes it abundantly clear that all this is for the author not just something for the far future but is already concrete reality here and now. It calls the Christian West for the final time to humble itself before Allah and to repent. Yet, it takes its point of departure in the fact that this will not happen anymore because the West has completely identified itself with Israel. Already before the coming down of the Iron Curtain, Akbar made it very clear that Allah's patience had come to an end. The years 1985-1988 will mark the end of the time of repentance for the West. Then there will be an end to the overpowering by the Antichrist. This time frame of about 40 years after the atomic bombs on Japan and the foundation of the state of Israel on Muslim territory marks the end of that time.

More than terrorism

The attacks by Muslims from various countries, at Western and in particular U.S. targets, in 1993, 1995, 1998 and 2001 are more than terrorism. They appear to be rooted in the above, briefly described, apocalyptic thinking. Acts of reprisal from the West in general and the U.S. in particular will not help much, except to

strengthen the already existing apocalyptic thinking of Islam. At the heart of the issue is not terrorism, but fundamentally clashing civilizations, and conflicting religious views about the future, etc. The West will need to give a moral as well as a religious answer.

At the same time it has to begin a process of self-examination. Is it possible that there is an element of truth in the vision of the Muslims in general, and that of apocalyptic Muslims in particular? Does it not share in the guilt of the Palestinian question, the unequal distribution of goods on earth, etc.? Abraham Kuyper once said that sackcloth and ashes behoove humankind. Must not the West ask for forgiveness instead of getting ready for reprisal?

At the same time it should be very clear that in no way can the recent attacks be justified — not even with a reference to the Koran.

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Guest Editorial

Christ is the only super power!

Bert Witvoet

We've all become a little smaller and a little more vulnerable since the terrorist attacks on America. Actually, our economies have shrunk a fair bit and our trust in whatever idols we kept in our closets has also taken a beating. Sales of Bible are up 27 per cent since the attacks, reports Zondervan Publishing. Whether all of this will lead to a real spiritual revival remains to be seen.

I hear many Christians say that what helps them is to keep in mind that God is in control. That is a healthy response to the unsettling and foundation-shaking events of September 11. It's also good to keep on blessing God, no matter what happens to us. I'm reminded of what I read in a book on Jewish history, in which a rabbi, in discussing prayer, counsels: "It is man's duty to bless God for the ills that befall him holding hidden good, even as he gives blessing for the good that comes to him, though it holds hidden ills." I like that kind of realism. Life is often a mixture of good and ill. But beyond that, what do we do as Christians? How do we flesh out our confessions of trust and dependence?

New patch, old garment

North American Christians could begin by keeping their loyalties pure. They must guard against sewing a Kingdom of God patch on the old garment of humanistic orders. They must not defend Western values as if

they are Kingdom values. Last Sunday, I heard a preacher say that what we are witnessing today in the aftermath of the terrorist attack is the struggle between Christianity and Islam. Christians believe in loving God and your neighbor, he said, and then he mentioned Osama bin Laden, who, in the name of Allah, shows hatred. As if all Muslims are like bin Laden and as if no Muslim believes in loving God and neighbor.

To talk about what we are witnessing today as a war between Christianity and Islam is stepping outside the pale of the gospel. Other than the fact that there is always a spiritual battle going on between the Christian faith and all competing faiths, there is no physical war to be had between Christianity and any other faith. Our fight is not against flesh and blood but against principalities. Shame on this pastor for making even the slightest connection between the terrorist attack and the relationship between Christianity and Islam. What I heard in the preacher's message was a confusion of Christianity with Western ideologies, and a confusion of Islam with what some extremists are saying and doing.

Taking up arms

I don't want to idealize Islam. Paul Johnson, a historian and journalist, wrote that Islam is an imperialist religion, more so than Christianity has ever been (*National Post*, Oct. 1, 2001). In the same article he points out that the Koran contains teachings that insists that nations, however mighty, must be fought "until they embrace Islam" (See Sura 9:5) No such teaching will be found in the New Testament, which guides the Christian church. I am not enamored with Islam, and I would never sacrifice the tremendous riches of the gospel and the amazing sacrifice of Jesus for a religion that demands that you earn your way into paradise. At the level of spiritual battle, I will take up the weapons and armor of Christ. But I will not, with the help of God, set myself over against people of other faiths for the purpose of harming or misrepresenting them or their religious institutions.

Whatever I do, I must do as a citizen of Christ's kingdom. I must seek its welfare and live according to its rules. This, in a sense, makes me somewhat indifferent to whatever plays itself out in the world. There are so many voices and actions out there that disregard that kingdom and over which we as Christians have no power, that we can get lost in an anxious attempt to be relevant and influential. I know that to Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. It is this knowledge that must guide us in all things. The question is: "How do we translate that confession into real life, into real politics?"

Living out of Christ's authority

Let me think of a few ways.

1) The confession that Christ holds all authority must evoke in us a deep-seated trust that things are going to work out well for those who are in Christ. The world, too, will be kept and purified for him. And even though our own personal world may be destroyed, we always have the hope of life eternal and a new heaven and earth.

2) We must not put our trust in presidents, prime ministers and their powerful armies. History has shown plenty of examples of failed campaigns and unexpected turns of events. Man proposes but God disposes. Don't expect military or economic might to fix what's wrong with this world.

3) We must not fear death so much. A prosperous

lifestyle has turned this goal into a real challenge for most of us. Christ has conquered death, so with Paul we should be able to say, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Or to quote Franklin Roosevelt, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

4) We must be willing to suffer the humility of the cross before we can live fully out of the victory of the crown. In fact, there is a problem with modern man's attempts to avoid all kinds of suffering. I'm thinking of what Thomas Merton wrote: "The truth that many people don't understand, until it is too late, is that the more you try to avoid suffering the more you suffer, because smaller and more insignificant things begin to torture you in proportion to your fear of being hurt."

5) We must live out of the promise that God's Word will not return to him empty. So let's keep on speaking and acting the truth in love, and let our Spirit-directed, Word-instructed voice be heard, even if it's a voice in the wilderness.

6) We must continue to seek the welfare of all creatures as long as we live, because all creatures – human beings, animals, plants, the earth – belong to Christ. Our task to be good vice-regents does not diminish in the face of apocalyptic events. We could here think of how Jews trapped in the ghetto of Warsaw and destined for extermination camps set up an orchestra, or of the advice of Martin Luther that, should Christ return tomorrow, he would plant a tree today.

7) We must keep ourselves holy. When the Apostle Peter talked about the coming day of the Lord, he asked what kind of people we ought to be in the face of terrible calamities. He answered his own question by saying, "You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming." (I could never quite figure out how we can possibly speed the coming day of the Lord, but I assume it has to do with holy living rather than with allowing nuclear warfare to break out as some fundamentalist Christians have asserted.)

Largely uncharted territory

Holy living is not limited to a clean moral life, by the way, but encompasses all our thoughts, words and deeds as we separate ourselves from the rule and influence of Satan in economics, politics and education, to mention but a few important areas, and wholly dedicate ourselves to doing God's will. It's well to remember here, too, that doing God's will in these areas is largely uncharted territory. In all humility we need to admit that "in this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this [keeping God's commands] obedience" (Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 114). Can we live with the acknowledgment that even in Christian education, perhaps our forte as a Reformed community, we have made only a small beginning of our obedience, and acknowledge that without losing courage?

Perhaps you, readers, can add your own thoughts about how we can live out of the reality of Christ's reign. It's not an easy thing to do in our spoiled Western world. But something tells me that one hidden good that may come out of the September 11 ills that befell us, and for which we bless God, is that it has become a little easier not to trust in ourselves but in God alone.

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Letters/Opinion

Does blessing military action connect to Jesus' teaching?

CC documents how we give our blessing to the military leaders who contemplate acts of retribution in payment for the repugnant acts of Sept. 11. "In the name of God, we too demand that those responsible for these ut-

terly evil acts be found and brought and justice" (letter signed by Rev. Peter Borgdorff and other Christian leaders). "A hunger for justice that shrinks from speaking of such recompense risks degenerating into mere

The impact of evil

Growing up in my Catholic Christian faith community, I was taught that God made everyone, even the people who do horribly bad things. I was also taught that Jesus died for all, even the people who do horribly bad things. Whether they know it or not, or accept it or not, does not do away with God's blessing of all, and Jesus' redemption of all.

That teaching, not always practised in my faith community, came to mind as I read Harry der Nederlanden's condemnation and judgment of those responsible for the Sept. 11 mass murder. Raising the reasonable question — is it too early to call for forgiveness? — he then went on to call them "evil men", "...a cancer that must be excised", cut out like the cancer that afflicted Mr. der Nederlanden's body.

The wonderful thing about God's justice is that it is God's justice, not ours. In our haste to do God's work I sense we need to gaze long and hard at Jesus on the cross, and see the ultimate expression of justice transformed to its highest expression, that is, mercy and love. These are difficult times, requiring sobering reflection. We do not

turn a blind eye to evil in our midst — we do need to support bringing those responsible before international tribunals, supporting tighter security, seizing assets of terrorist supporters, etc.

But der Nederlanden would greet violence with violence, and choose secular sides in a time when it is not easy to know always where good and evil reside. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, in the Gulag Archipelago, writing in the depth of man's depravity to fellow human beings, said: "the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either — but right through every human heart — and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of hearts, there remains... an un-uprooted small corner of evil."

As we rush to judgment, who is willing to destroy his or her own heart?

Rick Prashaw
Ottawa, Ont.

Comments on President Bush's September 20 Address

James W. Skillen

President George W. Bush presented a stirring and highly focused challenge to the world Sept. 20. His call to demolish the network of international, extra-legal cell groups, whose purpose is to wreak havoc through willful violence on American and other western interests, could not have been clearer. There can be little doubt that this is the pre-eminent cause to which the president will dedicate his energies in the years ahead.

Given the threat of long-term degradation that terrorist attacks like those of September 11 represent for ordinary life in open societies, the president's call to arms is justified. The government and American citizens must not, however, lose sight of the larger context of this focused call to action. Peripheral vision must be strengthened not weakened as the country concentrates on the struggle against terrorism. Three dimensions of that context are especially important to highlight immediately.

Purging terrorist cells

The purpose of surgery on cancerous cells is to remove danger to an otherwise healthy body. However, many political bodies around the world, including those in Afghanistan and a number of other countries,

are not healthy. The terrorist cells feed on those unhealthy political bodies. A sharply focused campaign to rid the world of terrorist cells will not by itself help to create or strengthen the healthy states that are needed. In fact, some countries now being torn by conflicts between "secular" Muslim governments and Islamist "reformers," between those sympathetic to democratic reforms and those highly opposed to them, may only be further destabilized by the international campaign that the United States will lead.

Concerns about this larger context do not provide a reason for ignoring or failing to fight terrorism. But in the long term it is the political health of nations and of international relations that must be strengthened. The fight against terrorism must not lead the U.S. and its anti-terrorist allies to take their eyes off the larger context and thereby fail to do all the other things necessary to encourage the growth of just governments and healthy societies.

A second dimension of the larger context that must not be lost from view is the full framework of justice within and among countries — a framework that we typically refer to as the rule of law in constitutionally defined states.

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sentimentality" (David T. Koyzis).

But don't acts of recompense risk something else, namely the maiming and killing of many non-combatants? (I think the use of the word "innocents" to describe human beings wherever they are is not biblically defensible.) Don't they also risk creating losers, who, when their anger boils over, will initiate more war and terror? Are we willing to take these risks only because the likely victims will not be *our* children, parents and friends?

Church blessing for nuclear bombing

And doesn't the use of the "name of God" to call for action against "these utterly evil acts" bring us to another risk, that of taking the name of God in vain? I spent several days in the U. S. this week where there is enough demonizing of the enemy and raising the victims to sainthood without the encouragement of the church.

The flight crew that dropped a nuclear

bomb on Hiroshima received a Catholic blessing before it departed. The two World Wars of the past century are marked by the shameful spectacle of German Lutherans killing American Southern Baptists and British Anglicans killing Italian Catholics.

It is time to ask a searching question of the worldwide church. What does our blessing on military action have to do with the explicit teachings of Jesus to do good for the enemy and pray for him or her? Why are we, on a good day, only willing to obey the second half of this command? I think that our blessing of military endeavors has this to do with the words of Jesus: nothing. Do we bow the knee to the gods of war while praying they will not devour us? Are we fooling ourselves into thinking we will not share the fate of those gods? It would be better to risk a little "mere sentimentality."

Michael Veenema
London, Ont.

Is life sacred?

In reaction to an editorial, Romy VanderBos wrote that from fetus to adult, "life is equally sacred." In my old KJV concordance the word sacred does not even appear! That concordance may be outdated, but it hints at the fact that maybe the Bible does not hold life sacred. If sacred means inviolable (if that is what Romy VanderBos means), then there is a problem with capital punishment (see for instance Achan's story), not to mention the warfare against the Amalekites.

The Roman Catholic Church as well as many Calvinist denominations hold to a just warfare theory, which implies that life is not sacred. In addition, it may be noted that some historians have suggested that until doctors discovered that the fetus was alive before three months — about two centuries ago — abortion was (usually) not regarded as abortion. This may help explain why the Bible does not regard it as murder when a woman aborts after having been attacked. It all adds up to the fact that the notion of sacredness of life is far more complex than the black and white description given by Romy VanderBos.

Bert den Boggende
Brooks, Alta.

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Opinion/Environment

World governments should co-operate more

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Retributive justice punishment of unlawful behavior does not stand on its own. Retribution is grounded in a right order that makes it possible for judges, juries, police officers, and military organizations to know what should be penalized and how.

Punishment doesn't establish order

Punishment itself does not establish a healthy order; it can only confirm the legitimacy of the right order by showing that unlawful behavior will not be allowed to go unpunished. Right now, it is self-evident to Americans and many others that the terrorist acts of September 11 were unjust and deserving of punishment. That is the president's clearly focused aim. Yet a long-term campaign of retribution against groups (enemies) that are clearly wrong takes for granted that the avengers (the U.S. government and its allies in the cause) are clearly right. And if an entire nation becomes preoccupied with a drama of this kind, it can begin to interpret all of reality

as a battle between the good guys (us) and the bad guys (them). Everything about us is right; everything about them is evil.

If we were in a domestic court setting, we would recognize that the criminal party stands confronted by the judge (or jury) that is called upon to mete out a just penalty. Outside the narrow focus of the case, however, we do not assume that the judge or jury in totality represents pure righteousness and goodness while the guilty party represents nothing but the embodiment of evil. The judge is not God and the guilty party is not Satan. The court's retributive decision is recognized as taking place in the larger context of a society in which all kinds of decisions must be made about constructive and distributive justice.

One potential danger of a long, international fight against terrorism is that the larger context of justice that undergirds retributive justice will be lost from view. The whole world becomes the courtroom in which one party represents right and the other wrong. Those who are trying to exercise just retri-

bution may begin to see themselves as fully righteous, standing over against those perceived to be the embodiment of evil. This danger is especially likely when the enemy, in this case, sees itself as authorized by God to pass judgment on satanic America. If in the days ahead all the acts of retribution and counter-violence on the world stage cause us to lose sight of the larger context of justice which governments are called, as humble servants, to uphold and nurture, we could find ourselves caught up in "holy war" fervor.

Even those governments that set out to punish justly may begin to act as if they are God's righteous, messianic judge of the whole earth. Whoever is not with us may be seen as a representative of the evil one.

Finally, the larger context in which retribution against terrorist cells should now be carried out is one in which the governments of the world work together not only to stop that kind of violence but also to strengthen a healthier international order of states. Prior to September 11, many struggles for economic, environmental, and social justice were the focus of different kinds of international organizations and summit conferences. If all of these ongoing negotiations become sidelined or are subsumed under the "war" against terrorism, the international order could become further unbalanced.

Moreover, since it's evident that the United States is the lead country on many of these fronts, its leadership in the anti-terrorist campaign could drive it to demand more for itself and its purposes in the world than can be justified by demands for international justice.

Here again, this is no reason why the nations of the world should not co-operate to fight the widespread, highly complex network of terrorist cells. Nevertheless, a sharp and prolonged focus that gradually loses sight of the larger context of international justice could only cause greater problems in the future and lead to new conflicts among nations that will be even more difficult to resolve.

I applaud President Bush's determination to lead the United States in an international, co-operative campaign against the terrorism that has taken and intends to take innocent lives. I urge him and the Congress and our fellow citizens to put this new focus in proper context.

Feedback to the author on this Commentary: write to: CapComm @cpjustice.org

Making marmots matter

Creation waits...

John Wood



The Vancouver Island Marmot is in the news. It is one of the most endangered mammals in Canada. Just over 30 individuals remain in the wild. What we are doing about our natural heritage is a matter of great debate today. The Species at Risk Act (SARA) is on the table in Ottawa. If Environment Minister David Anderson has his way, it will very soon become law. It is long overdue.

But there is little celebration in the scientific community over the current formulation of this act. Why have scientists been so cool to the very legislation that they have eagerly sought for nearly 30 years? It isn't that the intention for a balanced, Canadian law on species protection is wrong. But rather that at one critical point the act excludes the scientific community from the process. According to a news report October 4, Anderson still "wants the government not the scientists who draw up the list and update it each year, to have the final say on what will be protected." The argument for making this a political decision is that it "still needs to be taken by someone accountable to the voters, since it involves economics for landowners as well as animals."

Crippled cod, not tainted tuna

The argument runs that if the politicians fail to act to protect endangered species, then the voters will react. The "export of tainted tuna" case in the 1980s is a favourite example. When public health was threatened the voters punished the Tories. The point, they say, is that there was accountability for political actions taken regarding an animal species. But this sounds like a classic case of "bait and switch". It wonderfully misses the point of complaints by scientists about the SARA listing process. And it also illustrates exactly what they say is wrong with the draft law. When it is applied to species questions there can be trouble.

Political accountability is a notoriously fickle process. If we look at the more recent case of the troubled cod fishery, what do we find? An entire industry was crippled by the inability of the political process to get the facts straight on cod. One element, of many, in that failure was the stifling of the scientific voice.

Get it straight

Mark Twain once said, "First, get your facts straight. Then you can distort them at your leisure." He knew something about bending his facts to fit a fine tale. Twain also knew a good deal about the very human proclivity for shading things. The struggle of every democracy is in protecting the means for cutting through a partisan fog of debate and coming to sound policy decisions. That is what is facing us this fall as the House of Commons debates, once again, endangered species legislation.

First, get the facts straight. We need a process that will get at the best scientific information we can possibly obtain. Our science will not be perfect, but the checks and balances in science have produced good results over time. Let the scientific community make its best judgment. Then place that information in a context where action will be taken. The temptation of power here is enormous. It is much easier to sway political debate if you can spin the story from the start. If you can keep troublesome species off the list, then there is less pressure to do something. This puts the decision process the wrong way around. The government must find a way to allow its scientists to freely speak to the questions that they know best. These women and men have skills and dedication that is easily stifled by a politically driven hierarchy.

I first ran across Twain's aphorism on a course information packet at graduate school. To it the Registrar had added this witty remark - "The facts inside are provided for your pleasure." Let's have endangered species legislation that provides us the facts first. And then, "let the games begin!"

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.



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Arts/Media

Wycliffe dinner theatre raises awareness of urgency of Bible translation

Alan Doerksen

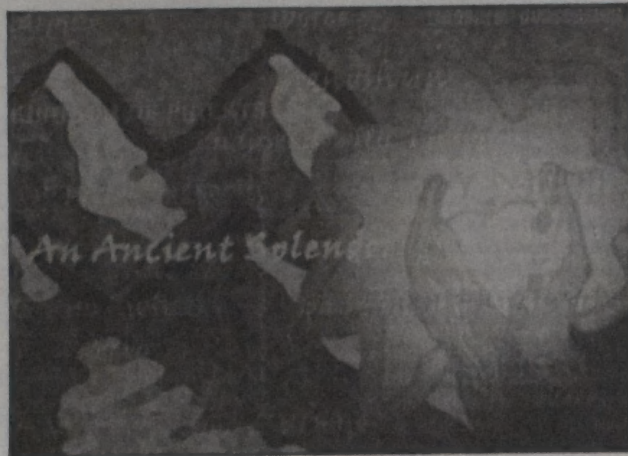
ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — *An Ancient Splendor* is dinner theatre with a difference: it tells a story that starts with creation and ends in modern times — an ambitious plotline for a two-hour play. The drama is a production of Wycliffe Associates' Spread the Word Ministries — a drama group connected with Wycliffe Bible Translators — and is touring Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan until late November.

Wycliffe Associates (WA) is a ministry which raises awareness, interest and support for Bible translation and literacy training. Lay Christians across Canada are encouraged to become involved in prayer groups, volunteer work teams (at home and abroad), career opportunities (becoming a Wycliffe missionary), and supporting translation and literacy training around the world through financial donations.

Spread the Word Theatre Ministries (STW) is the drama outreach of WA. Each production promotes some aspect of the work of Bible translation and literacy so that Christians all across Canada will learn about the work and have the opportunity to get involved.

Word of God in history

The main focus of *An Ancient Splendor* is on how the Word of



WYCLIFFE ASSOCIATES

God has affected the course of history. Act 1 starts with a mime character, representing the Word, creating the world. Naturally, the audience's imagination needs to be at work. Most of the play consists of short vignettes, followed by frenetic stage changes. In fact, the play's 12 actors play a total of more than 50 characters, with many costume changes.

The opening act shows some scenes from the Bible, moving from the creation to brief stories of Abraham being called by God, Moses receiving the 10 commandments, and some scenes from Jesus' life, including his crucifixion.

Act 2 of the play focuses on a young couple about to get married. Jack has been translating the Bible with Wycliffe in Indonesia, and is looking forward to returning there with his wife-to-be, Sarah. He gives her a day-before-the-wedding speech, in which he tells how God has been calling him to this work, and how God has brought the two of them together. Here's where the title, *An Ancient Splendor*, comes in. Jack sees a connection between his life and the lives of others who have worked and sacrificed over the centuries to bring God's Word to others.

Wycliffe Associates describe

the play as being "a modern love story and ... a story about people through the ages who gave their lives for an eternal plan and purpose. That plan and purpose involves an incredible splendor, older than creation, filled with love and beauty."

Tragedy strikes

But on the night before Jack and Sarah's wedding, something tragic happens. I won't give away all the details, in case you're planning to see the drama. But the result is, Sarah has to make the difficult decision of whether or not to go to Indonesia as a translator. Her mother and best friend advise her to stay home and find a job nearby, but Sarah feels a calling to complete the task that Jack started. As the drama unfolds, we see how she deals with this struggle.

Interspersed with the main plot are historical vignettes showing how Christians at various times had to face challenges when sharing their faith and the Word of God with others. One sequence shows the martyrdom of Stephen. Another shows Christians, imprisoned by Romans, who are faced with the challenge of how to protect from destruction a shipment of Scriptures. Pioneer Protestant missionary William Carey, in another sequence, argues with his peers that Jesus' Great Commis-

sion is ongoing, and not just for New Testament times.

All of this makes for a thought-provoking play. But concentration is needed to follow the intertwining plotlines. Some of the music played during stage-changes is a bit loud and jarring, although other background music blends in well, like the excerpt from James Taylor's *Fire and Rain*: "Won't you look down upon me, Jesus, you've got to help me make a stand. I just can't see it through another day."

A special dinner is served to the audience each evening the drama is performed. This consists of "Creation Salad" — which makes a connection between the creation sequence and the menu; flat bread, which originated in the Middle East in biblical times; a hearty Mediterranean soup, which connects to the European and Middle Eastern sequences of the play; and ice cream for dessert.

The drama is an effective way of creating interest in the work of Wycliffe, and focuses on the importance and urgency of bringing the Word of God to all people.

In past years, Wycliffe Associates have presented other notable dramas, such as *Martyred* — the story of a Wycliffe missionary in Colombia who gave his life so that others could have the Bible in their own language.

A People's History: some observations

Bert den Boggende

In 1967, six weeks after becoming a landed immigrant I started teaching 33 Grade 4 and 5 students in Trenton, Ont. Those weeks improved my language skills somewhat, but my knowledge of Canadian history and geography was still very limited. It was through the *Pirates and Pathfinders* TV program that I got my first exposure to explorers of the Canadian frontiers (not to mention the rest of the world).

In spite of my limited knowledge, once in a while I even deviated from the text, usually when questioned by one of the Grade 5 students — a challenge I still look back to with appreciation. Four years later, in Brampton, I had opportunity to teach history to Grades 7 and 8. By then I had improved my knowledge of Canada through courses in French Canadian history and Canadian art and architecture and was thus somewhat better prepared to teach 18th and 19th century Canadian history. Edith Dyell's well-written texts, adaptations of what most scholars

of that time wrote about, focused on warfare, trade, and the drive to confederation.

Fast forward to 1990s

Fast forward to the 1990s by which time I had become acquainted with Canada's story through art, religion, education and immigration, and had begun publishing articles about women's education in 19th century Ontario. Warfare and politics received very limited attention, although the latter was not completely ignored. In an article to be published in the fall of 2002, I attempt to show that British author Harriet Martineau, who briefly visited Niagara Falls as a tourist in 1834 and 1836, may have suggested to Lord Durham that the colony should receive independence. Over the last few decades historians have moved more and more to the broad spectrum of social history, a move lamented by Jack Granatstein in his easily read but weakly researched and poorly thought-through book *Who Killed Canadian History?*

When last year the CBC an-

nounced its documentary TV series *A People's History*, I wondered how new its approach would be. Other obligations prevented me from seeing the first episode, and I missed a few others as well. The first one I saw immediately reminded me of *Pirates and Pathfinders* and the other episodes of Edith Dyell's books. Recently aired again, the nine episodes could be regarded as great illustrations of old texts. Jack Granatstein may be happy with the emphasis on explorations, Indians at war, trade, and politics, but the approach has little in common with the social history most historians presently write about.

Different approach to Canadian history

As the first episode makes clear, the primary focus is on building a nation, through the explorations, warfare with Indians and between the French, British and Americans, the fur trade and the battle for democracy. However interesting and however well done, the episodes reflect only one pos-

sible approach to Canada's history. Let me suggest a different one with the help of *Canadian Women: A History* by Alison Prentice et al. For instance, Part One, "The Founding Mothers: Beginnings to the Mid-Nineteenth century," has chapters on "The first women," "French women in the New World," "Carders of wool, drawers of water: women's work in British North America," and "Women and the public order." While covering nearly the same period as the first half of the whole TV series, the so-called crucial dates and events (1763, 1812, etc.) are notably absent. Instead, the stories deal with birthing, marriage, family life and work.

While I think the book suffers from some methodological flaws and has too many typographical and factual errors, and while men's history would look differently, even this limited reference indicates that the building of a nation is much more than warfare, politics and trade. Although the TV series include women, they are incidental, background to the "real"

story. In other words, the question needs to be asked if justice is being done to a large segment of society.

But the problem is not confined to the role and place of women. In the older approach to history, religion played an initial important role through the Recollets, Jesuits, Ursulines, bishop Laval, etcetera, but after the Enlightenment it gradually disappears from the scene — and not just in the writings of Marxist historians. The gods may be fragmented, as Lethbridge sociologist Reginald Bibby has shown, but belief in God was, and still is, accepted by the great majority of Canadians.

Like the women's side of the story, religion in the TV series is an incidental, certainly after the French period. John Webster Grant called one of his books *A Profusion of Spires*, but the CBC TV series seems to regard those spires as picturesque, architectural background material rather than an illustration and expression of what for many people was central in their life. Revivals may not have "burnt over" Canada as in Upper

Church/Media

Taliban arrests 35 more Afghans in alleged missionary probe

Foreign press 'punished' for photographing defendants

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) — Taliban authorities arrested 35 more Afghan aid workers, bringing the total to more than 50 Afghans jailed by the strict Islamist regime since early August on suspicion of aiding covert Christian missionary work.

According to international aid workers who asked not to be identified, at least 35 Afghans employed by the recently banned International Assistance Mission (IAM) were taken into custody at the Planning Ministry office in Kabul when they came to get their salary payment.

Quoted on September 9 by Associated Press (AP), the sources said a state-run radio broadcast had ordered Afghan staffers of IAM to come and collect their pay at the Planning Ministry, which co-ordinates all foreign aid organizations.

"When the Afghans showed up, they were arrested," AP reported.

In a separate report from the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), an expatriate aid worker said she knew of some 15 to 17 Afghan employees of IAM who had been arrested by the Taliban's religious police since the Christian relief group was shut down on

August 31.

"I do not know the reason for their arrest," the aid worker told APP, "but they were taken into custody during the first week of September and have not been seen since then."

The Taliban have not yet confirmed or commented on the reported detentions.

A private volunteer agency that had 117 professionals from 17 countries working in five cities of Afghanistan, IAM had employed some 300 Afghans in its projects of health, economic development, education and rehabilitation. Its entire foreign staff was expelled from the country.

The Taliban have accused IAM and another Christian agency, SERVE, of links with the Shelter Now relief organization, shut down in early August for allegedly trying to convert Muslim Afghans to Christianity. The regime's religious police arrested eight foreigners and 16 Afghans working for Shelter Now.

Speaking from Kabul on September 10, a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) told Compass that their office had no "precise information at this moment" about the

alleged arrest of 35 Afghan IAM staff.

Following established procedure, the Red Cross had last month informed the Taliban of their readiness, "upon the regime's invitation," to visit Shelter Now's 16 Afghan detainees. A similar offer had been extended on behalf of the Christian relief group's foreign detainees, eventually visited by the ICRC on August 25.

"But so far, we haven't been called for the Afghans," the representative said.

Life in jail or hanging

A senior Taliban official told Associated Press that some of the 16 Afghans working for Shelter Now would be either sentenced to life in jail or death by hanging. Those most endangered, local sources said, were the Afghans involved in teaching the local languages to the foreigners.

According to the Taliban's deputy minister of religious police, any Afghan convicted of converting to Christianity would be given three days to recant and return to Islam. But even if spared the death penalty for repenting, the official said, the defendant would still face other punishments for "betraying their religion and traditions."

Taliban Minister for Vice and Virtue Mohammed Wali declared that the Afghans must be charged "because they must have known what these foreigners were doing, and they did not report them."

Although the Taliban claim to have "strong evidence" that Shelter Now's foreign staff were preaching Christianity, they have not presented proof that any Afghans had actually converted.

Taliban officials continue to sidestep the death penalty possibility which hangs over both the foreigners and their Afghan workers,



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taliban Foreign Minister Wakil Ahmed Mutawakel

stating that once a verdict is reached, the punishment will be decided "according to the principles of Islamic law."

"If the crime is worthy of imprisonment, they will be imprisoned," Chief Justice Noor Mohammed Saqib of the Taliban Supreme Court told Afghan Islam Press (AIP). "If the crime is worthy of hanging, they will be hanged."

Foreign media under hotel arrest

Meanwhile, some 12 foreign journalists covering the Kabul trial of the eight foreign Christians were barred September 9 from leaving their hotel, and their rooms were searched for cameras, film and videos.

Taliban authorities said the journalists were being punished for taking photographs of the foreign defendants when they appeared in court the previous day. It was the first time the six women and two men had appeared in public since they were taken into custody, although a few diplomatic and family visits have been permitted.

Although both still and video

filming of people is technically banned by the Taliban, the rules are usually relaxed for major news stories. Several of the reporters' official Afghan interpreters were also detained, reportedly for failing to stop their foreign charges from taking pictures.

The four Germans, two Australians and two Americans under investigation were accompanied by several relatives and a diplomatic representative from each of their countries to the court on September 8, where for the first time they heard the charges filed against them.

Shocked about accusations

"We have not had a chance to defend ourselves," declared German George Taubmann, Shelter Now's Afghanistan director and one of the eight prisoners. "It is simply not true. We have not converted anybody. We are shocked about all the accusations."

With the press corps confined to Kabul's Intercontinental Hotel, it was unclear whether any of the Afghan or foreign detainees had been brought before the Supreme Court yesterday or today. Taliban authorities, who declared the Afghan "suspects" would be tried separately, have not said whether they would be called to give evidence against their foreign employers at the first trial.

Although the majority of media coverage has focused on the fate of the eight expatriate Christians, a U.N. official told Reuters, "We are more concerned about the Afghan staff of SNI." The international body has called for a fair trial in which justice will be done for "all 24 of the accused foreign and Afghan aid workers."

According to United Nations' figures, some 250 foreign aid workers are overseeing relief operations that employ at least 20,000 Afghans across the country.

With jobs scarce and local income averaging \$4 per month, Afghans have until now coveted the chance to work for Western aid organizations. But last month's crackdown against foreigners has made Afghans nervous about even being seen in public with any foreigner, according to Kabul-based aid workers.

"Friendship with infidels is forbidden," Chief Justice Saqib intoned during his sermon at Friday prayers in Kabul's Pul-e-Khishti mosque on September 7. The judge sternly warned the Muslim faithful to stay away from non-Muslim "infidels," declaring they were evil and trying to destroy their faith.

Religion, women downplayed in *A People's History*

... continued from page 7

New York State, but they did play a significant role in Upper Canada. The upsurge of Methodist and Baptist churches had a great impact on people's daily life, not to mention on education, architecture, business, the clergy reserves, newspapers and the disagreements between bishop Strachan and Egerton Ryerson. The examples could easily be multiplied.

It could be objected that quotes from letters and diaries give some voice to the people. But that is only partly true: the quotes are illustrations of the main events and reflect the literate elite. With so much criticism you could imagine that I could recommend not bothering to watch the TV series. Such a

recommendation would be short-sighted, however. In fact, I encourage you to see the episodes. The filming is impressive — especially the geographic scenery — and the events did play a significant role in the life of the nation. Historians of history films and documentaries have often criticized those films and documentaries on their inaccuracies: none seems to be free from wrong details and/or facts. While such criticism is valuable, another approach may be more important. Each film, and each documentary, has a specific perspective; in effect, a movie perspective becomes another one among the several already existing perspectives. By highlighting women's and religious history I have attempted to show the shortcomings of *A People's History*. By the time you read these comments the CBC has probably already begun airing the final nine episodes. If the cinematography is as good as before you'll be in for another treat, but you need to keep the one-sidedness of the perspective in mind.

Saudi police holding 13 foreign Christians

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia (Compass) — At least 13 foreign Christians have been arrested since mid-July in Jeddah, where Saudi Arabia's religious police are apparently trying to track down Saudi nationals thought to have contact with expatriate house churches in the city. The detained Christians, all nationals from India, Ethiopia, Nigeria, the Philippines and Eritrea, are members of house church groups within Jeddah's expatriate community. A gathering of about 400 Christian foreigners in a rented hall in late June may have triggered the wave of arrests. A report filed with police complained that the party was "a Christian meeting in a public place," which is strictly forbidden under the Islamic laws of the Saudi kingdom.

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Church

Nigerian state accused of using mercenaries to attack Christians

Obed Minchakpu

JOS, Nigeria (Compass)—The Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) has accused the government of Bauchi state in northern Nigeria of using Muslim mercenaries to attack Christians in Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro local government areas, which are mainly inhabited by Christians. Religious conflicts broke out between Muslims and Christians in the two areas on June 18 and

August 5.

Executive Council members of the church, who met on the issue in Jos, August 6-8, expressed concern over the violence between Muslims and Christians. They accused the Bauchi state government of aligning with the Muslims to attack Christians.

"This attack (on the Christians) is still being sustained at the time of this presentation. What has added a very disturbing dimension

to the latest clash is the involvement of groups of mercenaries reportedly hired from Plateau state," said Rev. Alexander Lar and Rev. John Audu, president and secretary of the church, in an official statement.

"Routes used by these warriors (mercenaries) are Dengi through Dul, Kabwir through Boi, Gindiri through Lere, and Maijuju through Boto. Mercenaries are believed to have come from Wase, Yelwa,

Shendam, Kurgwi, Namu, and Mangu," the church leaders said.

Many deaths, widespread destruction

As proof of their claims, the church leaders said, "Three vehicles have been intercepted, loaded with warriors (mercenaries) and weapons entering the conflict areas. The vehicles are presently in the custody of the police in Tafawa Balewa," they added, listing the vehicles' registration numbers.

"This has resulted in many

deaths and widespread destruction," the church leaders said.

Church property burned in the conflict included the COCIN Bible School, staff quarters, students' hostels and the library. Church leaders called on the federal government of Nigeria to declare a state of emergency in the conflict areas.

The clashes left more than 100 persons dead and about 5,000 Christians have become refugees, who are presently taking refuge in Kanam and Pankshin towns of Plateau state, also in northern Nigeria.

'Arsenokoites'

"We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels... for adulterers and perverts [Greek *arsenokoitais*], for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel. (1 Timothy 1:9-11, NIV)

This is one of the verses that comes up regularly in discussions of homosexuality and the Bible, because it contains the disputed Greek term *arsenokoites* (plural *arsenokoitai[s]*). This term is usually understood to refer to a man who engages in homosexual relations, although some have recently argued that it has the narrower meaning of either "male prostitute" or "pederast" (a man who has sex with boys). The difficulty is that the word in question is not found in Greek writings prior to the letters of Paul (he also uses this word in 1 Cor 6:9), so that we cannot determine its meaning from general Greek usage in antiquity. However, there is widespread agreement among scholars that the word refers to a male who engages in gay sex of some kind, since the word is a compound of the two words *arsen*, "male," and *koite*, "bed." You might say that a literal translation of the term might be "male-bedders." Furthermore, since the word is masculine, the meaning seems to be something like "a man who beds [another] male."

All of this is widely agreed, although this agreement is not very clearly reflected in the NIV's unfortunate translation "perverts."

But this still leaves us with the questions: why did Paul use a previously unattested word here, and could he be referring here only to a specific kind of (unacceptable) homosexual behavior, leaving other kinds as morally acceptable within the context of a Christian lifestyle? I believe a plausible answer to both these questions can be given if we recognize that Paul, when he uses the term *arsenokoites*, is deliberately alluding to the Septuagint of Leviticus 20:13 (as well as the closely related Leviticus 18:22). Let me explain.

A scriptural allusion

Lev 20:13 reads as follows in the NIV: "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable." The Hebrew of the first part of this verse could be literally rendered as follows: "and-a-man who lies with a-male with-lyings-of-a-woman." Now the Septuagint — the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament with which Paul was thoroughly

Chapter & Verse

Al Wolters



familiar, and which he often cites when quoting Scripture in his letters — renders these opening words in a way which can be literally rendered as follows: "and whoever sleeps with a-male (with) a-bedding-of-a-woman." The last eight words of this literal English translation correspond to the Greek words *arsenos koiten*. What is remarkable about this Greek wording is that *koite(n)* normally means just "bed," but is here used in the sense of sexually "bedding" another person. The Septuagint at this point is using a very distinctive Greek phraseology, which to my knowledge occurs nowhere else in surviving ancient Greek writings. In the light of this, it is very likely that Paul (or perhaps some unknown earlier Jewish writer) coined the Greek word *arsenokoites*, "male-bedder," to refer to a man who engaged in the kind of sex forbidden in Lev 20:13 (and 18:22).

A general prohibition radicalized

But what kind of sex was that? Was it homosexual relations in general, or only a specific kind of such relations? In my opinion there is little reason to doubt that the standard rabbinic interpretation of these verses, which both Paul and his Jewish readers would have known and accepted, was correct, namely that all forms of homosexual relations were forbidden.

By his use of the unusual term *arsenokoites* the apostle is therefore indicating that the verses in Leviticus to which this term so pointedly alludes are part of the moral law of the Old Testament which continues to hold (like the commandments prohibiting stealing, blasphemy or bestiality) for the New Testament people of God. In fact, since Jesus teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount that the Old Testament law should be understood in a radicalized sense in the New, it is probably true that this part of the Old Testament law is a revelation of God's will in an even broader and deeper sense for the church than it was for Israel.



Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario. He was recently involved in a panel discussion on the Bible and homosexuality.

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Theology

What we believe (the doctrinalist emphasis)

What does it mean to be Reformed? Part 2

This second instalment on Reformed identity is taken from the revived denominational plan produced by the Christian Reformed Church head office in Grand Rapids, Mich.

1. Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16)

Reformed Christians have a high view of Scripture. They believe the Bible is the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God. Two passages of Scripture illumine Scripture's nature and authority:

"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for

Inspired, infallible, and authoritative are three words Reformed Christians frequently use in explaining their view of Scripture.

reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

"First of all, you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Pet. 1:20-21)

Inspired, infallible, and authoritative are three words Reformed Christians frequently use in explaining their view of Scripture. "Inspired" has in view the source of Scripture: God himself speaking by his Holy Spirit through human authors. "Infallible" means that the Scriptures are true and absolutely unailing in matters of faith and practice. The Bible is true and trustworthy in all that it intends to teach. "Authoritative" refers to the claim of God's Word upon believers' lives. Believers live "under" and are called to obey God's Word.

During the Reformation, Reformed Christians asserted *Sola Scriptura* ("only Scripture") to distinguish themselves from the Roman Catholic Church, which asserted that Scripture, tradition (the teachings of the church), and the official pronouncements of the church were all equal in authority. To this the Reformers responded that only Scripture is our authority for faith and life.

Today the strongest threat to a high view of Scripture is not from

those who would try to raise up church teaching to a level of authority equal to Scripture. Rather, it's from those who would pull down Scripture and say that Scripture is not the Word of God at all, that it's not from God, that it's not historically accurate, that things like the resurrection are just myth, and that it certainly isn't authoritative for our lives. Christians counter that no matter how foolish it may look to the modern, enlightened mind, Christians believe this book is the means by which the God of the universe has communicated with human beings, his imagebearers. Christians believe this book is the Word of God.

Another threat to a high view of Scripture today is what might be called the "God told me this" view of revelation. Many Christians testify that God has revealed himself to them personally, inwardly, and uniquely. While Reformed Christians fully embrace the work of the Holy Spirit, they also insist that the Spirit and the Word work together. As Henry Stob, past Calvin Seminary professor, has succinctly stated it, "The Spirit always rides the back of Scripture." Or as Bernard of Clairvaux said it, "Scripture is the wine cellar of the Holy Spirit."

Finally, a word about the Bible's message. It's possible for Christians to become so absorbed in debates about the Bible's nature and authority that they miss its positive message. The Bible is not first of all a set of problems to be solved; it is a dramatic story of God's salvation of the world. The main character in the story is Jesus Christ. And the climax of the story is his death and resurrection. All this and more is what the church has in mind when it says the Bible at its core is "redemptive revelation."

2. Creation-Fall-Redemption (Col. 1:15-20)

Creation-fall-redemption is a basic Reformed way of organizing and understanding the Bible and its message, and of understanding history. God created the world; the world fell into sin; God has redeemed and is redeeming the world through the work of Christ, a redemption that will one day be complete when God creates a new heaven and new earth.

Pastors and elders are always delighted when young people come forward to make profession of faith. In the course of the interview, the young person is usually asked, "What does it mean to be a

Christian?" Pastors and elders are pleased with any answer that includes a clear reference to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and his death and resurrection for our eternal life. But Reformed pastors and elders are doubly pleased when a young person begins the answer to that question, "Well, Christians believe that in the beginning, God created everything. And then, the world fell into sin...." Creation-fall-redemption is the way Reformed people tell the story. It's the story line of history and of Scripture.

More will be said later about the importance of the doctrine of creation. Here, however, the critical importance of the biblical teaching that human beings are *imagebearers of God* must be noted.

"Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Gen. 1:26-27)

The biblical teaching that human beings are imagebearers of God is pivotal for knowing ourselves and knowing God. Human beings image God as they exercise their God-given mandate to rule over all things (v. 26) and as they live in loving communion with each other.

As John Calvin says at the beginning of his *Institutes*, human beings come to know more about themselves as they learn more about God, and they come to know more about God as they learn more about themselves. This is so because human beings, in fact, *bear God's image*.

The truth that human beings are all imagebearers of God has implications for nearly every ethical position the church takes, including those on abortion, sexuality, marriage, abuse, capital punishment, war, race, and disabilities. Few biblical doctrines cast a longer shadow over the church's ethical discourse than the doctrine of humanity's creation in the image of God. Indeed, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

3. Grace (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Grace is the unmerited favor of God toward those who do not



"Creation-fall-redemption is a basic Reformed way of organizing and understanding the Bible and its message, and of understanding history." Above: *The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*, a fresco by Cappella Brancacci from 1426-7 (Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)

deserve it. Grace is the unconditional and freely given love of God to people who can do nothing to earn it, but can only accept it as a gift. Grace is the love of the father in the parable of the prodigal son that moves him to welcome and accept the lost son, not because the son finally did this or that, but simply because the father loved his son unconditionally. Grace is the astounding truth that nothing we do can make God love us more or less. God loves us because he loves us. God loves us because he is rich in love.

Historically, when Reformed folks have talked about grace, they have stressed how much salvation is a gift of God, not a human achievement. Indeed, as Paul says,

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." (Eph. 2:8-10)

The "five points of Calvinism" refer to Reformed doctrines that

underscore the radical nature of God's grace. They have often been summarized with the acronym TULIP (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints). As an acronym, TULIP is often misunderstood as focusing on human failings. But, in fact, its central thrust is the graciousness of God, and the biblical teachings that lie behind it are some of the richest teachings in all of Scripture:

- Every human being and every part of human existence is corrupted by sin, leaving humanity helpless and hopeless except for the grace of God. Paul says, "You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once lived" (Eph. 2:1). In their fallen condition, human beings are not just weakened, sick, at a disadvantage. They're dead, unable to do anything, unable to believe, without God's help.

- In his divine mercy, God has chosen believers and called them to himself in love even before they were born, indeed, before the world was even created. "[God] chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:4-5). God did not elect his children based upon his foreknowledge of who would believe, but did so "according to the good pleasure of his will."

- God's saving grace is not universal, but particular, given only to those whom God has chosen from eternity.

Predestined and called

"For those whom [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born within a large family. And those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified. (Rom. 8:29-30)

God's grace, not human decision, is the decisive factor in salvation. Believers do not choose God so much as God chooses believers. Jesus taught that "no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (John 3:5) and "no one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me" (John 6:44). Certainly faith is a human act and decision. But even this faith is a gift of God.

- By his power God holds believers securely in his grasp and will not permit anyone or anything to separate believers from himself.

Theology/Psychology

Jesus said,

"My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand." (John 10:27-28)

Believers are held securely in God's grip. Believers do not hang onto God so much as God hangs onto believers. This has been called the eternal security of the believer, the perseverance of the saints. As Paul says at the end of Romans 8,

"Who will separate us from the love of Christ?... I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:35-39).

When Calvinists talk about their salvation, they become speechless at how thoroughly their salvation is the work of God — from beginning to end, God's gift, God's grace. In the words of the

hymn, "Nothing in my hands I bring, only to thy cross I cling."

4. Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Covenant is one of the richest biblical concepts for describing God's relationship to his people. Covenant means partnership, an agreement between parties that entails promises and obligations. It's significant that the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, again and again portrays God as one who binds himself to his people in promise, in obligation, in covenant. God doesn't have to promise anyone anything. But again and again, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, to David, God promises to love them and be with them.

The whole Bible is suspended on the great covenants God makes with all these people and others. Furthermore, the Bible is unified around this *one* covenant of grace. One of the reasons one tends to hear more Old Testament preaching in Reformed Churches than in many other churches is because Reformed preachers don't set the

Old Testament against the New Testament, but see the Old Testament and the New Testament as revealing one covenant of grace, a single covenant beginning with God's promise to Adam and Eve that he would crush the head of the serpent and spanning to the new city of God described in Revelation 22.

The concept of covenant — God binding himself to his people in promise and commitment — is a rich concept for understanding God's saving activity today. In worship God renews his covenant promises to us, and we renew our covenant vows to God. Preaching declares and offers the covenant promises of God. The Lord's Supper is a sign of God's new covenant. In baptism God promises to be faithful to our children. Fellow members of the church make promises to God and one another.

Together these promises form a thick web of commitments, of communal connection that we know as the body of Christ, the church. Church membership is very important because when

someone joins the church, she is not just putting her name on the membership list of an organization, but is entering into covenant with God and with other believers. In this covenantal understanding of the church, leaving one congregation for another is a very weighty matter because it tears at this rich web of covenantal connections and commitments made at the congregational level.

Covenant is an important and strategic emphasis for the church in this individualistic culture. In a time when society is desperately trying to figure out how morality and character are developed, Christians understand the key role of promise-making and promise-keeping. Our society needs communities of promise. The church needs an emphasis today upon covenant in our understanding of God and the church.

5. Common Grace (Matthew 5:43-48)

God's common grace, in distinction from his saving grace, refers to that attitude of divine favor that extends to humanity in general, believers and unbelievers alike. The church has observed three distinct evidences of common grace in the world. First, God gives natural gifts to unbelievers as well as believers. One doesn't have to be a Christian to be an excellent pianist or attorney or scientist. Second, God restrains sin in all people. Because of sin, human beings are not as good as they could be; but because of common grace, they are not as bad as they could be either. This is why unbelievers at times actually seem to be better people than believers. Virtues such as patience, courage, and compassion never totally lose their resonance in any imagebearer of God.

Third, God enables unbelievers to perform positive acts of civic good. God preserves a basic sense of civic justice that enables human societies to function in an orderly way. Common grace prevents society, marred and distorted by sin and evil, from totally disintegrating.

The teaching of common grace has many implications for how

Christians live and serve in the world. God's common grace is a model of grace that Christians should embody not just within the church and toward believers, but in the world and toward all people. Common grace encourages believers to develop positive points of contact with unbelievers as they live in the world together and seek common ends. Christians should give their attention to not just what divides them from, but what unites them with all people.

Common grace is the reason Christians can appreciate movies or novels or works of art produced by unbelievers, viewing them as God's good gifts, and at times even seeing in such works the rumors of transcendence or grace. Common grace reminds Christians that the conflict of this age (what Abraham Kuyper called the "antithesis") is between God and Satan, not between Christians and non-Christians. The battle is not between two groups of people, but between two spiritual powers, which, significantly, reside in and cut through every person.

The teaching of common grace calls the church to have multiple purposes in her ministry that correspond to multiple divine purposes. The deacons' food pantry, the chaplain's hospital ministry, and the pastor's marriage counseling are all part of the mission of God to save the world, even though the receivers of these ministries may not be believers or become believers. The Christian's deep desire is that every person in the world will bow to Jesus Christ. But within that overarching mission of God, the church ministers in multiple situations with multiple purposes. And it does not subordinate the value of one ministry to another. God is glorified in many different things, and all these ministries have their integrity and purpose in the overarching mission of God to save the world.

A nation mourns

Last month I wrote about how our "tears dissolve the wall of illusion between who we *pretend* to be and who we really *are*." When I submitted my column, I had no idea this proverb would play itself out on the international stage before our very eyes. Will we ever forget the horror we experienced as we watched the twin towers collapse? Will we ever forget the sorrow we felt at the loss of six-thousand lives? Will we ever forget the tears of president George W. Bush, journalist Dan Rather, late show comedian Dave Letterman and an unnamed local violinist as she played a haunting hymn in a downtown cathedral?

A world racked by suffering

Richard Middleton once wrote, "we live in a world racked by suffering. Our marriages, despite our best intentions, fall apart. Close friends die of cancer. On Canadian reserves, native teenagers take their own lives in desperation; while in our cities we are confronted by hollow-eyed street people casting furtive glances in our direction in the hope of a handout. Meanwhile the victims of political violence pile up in the streets of Haiti, Rwanda, Bosnia and Tel Aviv as so many dead bodies...." He then suggests most of us have a hard time responding compassionately to the pain of others.

This may be so on a continuous basis because there is *so much* suffering in the world. Still, when horrors of the dimensions of the month of September are brought into our living rooms we grieve collectively and appreciate the common bond mutual pain gives us.

Strength in vulnerabilities

For decades men believed that gentle touch, hand clutching or genuine emotion was a sign of

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

weakness. Now we know it is simply part of being human. By embracing our painful emotions we learn new ways of living and consequently discover greater compassion, trust and understanding within ourselves as well as in others. As a result we are more able to walk the road of sorrow together in a way that encourages acceptance and healing.

In the last few days, journalists have been commenting on the strength of the American people. Life goes on despite the images of destruction still present in their minds. The patriotic spirit is out in full force.

Illusion versus reality?

Still, the reality of their pain is no illusion. Media coverage after the tragedy talked about the importance of faith, family and friends. Several well-known religious leaders appeared on the Larry King show. Prayer and God played a big role in services across the United States.

The common bond of pain portrays the nation to be a caring and concerned people. We hope and pray that the manner in which they will seek justice will prove them equally caring and concerned.

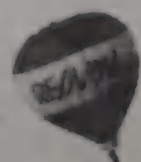


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Christians and society

Too easy to be part of the Christian Church

Interview with George Barna

Crosswalk.com editors Stephen McGarvey (News and Culture) and Cheryl Johnston (Spiritual Life) recently spoke with George Barna, founder and president of the Barna Research Group, about his new book *Boiling Point and the future of Christians and the Church in America*. We reprint it with their permission, not because we are inclined to agree with Barna but because he raises issues about being the church of Christ that all congregations must wrestle with in the coming decades.

"Mega-churches are not the silver bullet we're looking for."

Crosswalk: Do you think the coming generation is more prepared to face the dilemmas of the future than past generations were?

Barna: Probably not. I think, certainly, they're going to face different kinds of challenges. But they've got different kinds of resources going for them too. Every generation has to go through very significant battles to understand its world. I think in some ways the Mosaics [Barna's name for children born later than 1985] have it a little bit tougher because their world is changing at such a rapid pace; much faster than any other generation has had to put up with before. They are probably going to be more inter-reliant, relating to each other in deeper and more significant ways. Certainly they have some great tools to work with, but the challenges are continuing to grow.

Crosswalk: Do you think that technology has undermined education at all? Doesn't the technology dumb us down a little bit because a lot more is done for us than we can do for ourselves?

Barna: Well, I think we've got to understand though that there is an entirely different world that young people today are being raised in. People today are raised in a world of images. People of the old world were raised in a time when gaining access to information was a big deal. That's no longer a big deal in our culture. The big issue today isn't access, it's interpretation. People from the past lived in a world where hard goods were the stuff that you lived for. You produced things that you could touch and feel. Today we live in a culture, an American

culture, where it's really services and information that we produce. It's an intangible. Mosaics are not linear thinkers like people from the olden times. There's a completely different way in which information is processed and the kinds of responses and answers that people come up with. So, are people being less well-educated? No. I think people are being educated in a different way, to deal with a different cultural context.

Crosswalk: Your statistics are fascinating about the future of the church over the next ten years. Where should the average Christian who reads your book get started?

Barna: Well I think self-examination is a great place. One of the frightening things that we find in our research all the time is that even among the tens of millions of born again Christians, about half of them would say that when it comes to Christianity they are not absolutely committed to the faith. I'll tell you something that I know is kind of controversial, but I'm rapidly coming to the conclusion that part of our problem is that we've made it too easy to be part of the Christian church. I think that there is very little sense of privilege and awe and responsibility that comes along in our culture with the notion of being considered a disciple of Christ. It is like, 'Hey, I got my salvation taken care of, I've got my membership card at my church. Now let me go to the country club and do my thing.'

The problem is that Christianity is not just about being a church



"The problem is that Christianity is not just about being a church member. It is about consistently trying to become more like Christ. It is about life transformation."



BARNARESEARCHGROUPPHOTOS

George Barna

member. It is about consistently trying to become more like Christ. It is about life transformation. So each individual has ask, 'Well so what? What difference does it make if I'm really a follower of Christ and if I'm a follower of Christ, what difference should I be making in this world that this guy Barna is describing? Do I have a responsibility here to myself, to my Savior, to my church, to my children, to my country? What is the nature of that responsibility and if someone was watching my life and trying to figure out, "What is his nature?" Who am I really? What is the conclusion they would come to? Would they see me as a Christian first?'

Crosswalk: Would you say a large part of that problem is a lack of biblical teaching in the churches or a lack of focus on studying the Bible for oneself in a church?

Barna: Well that's partly it. I think that there are a number of different issues that come into play there. One has to do with modeling. We don't have many individuals that we can look to and say 'Aah! that is what it looks like in practice.' So we need those role models.

Secondly, the whole notion of accountability. We basically have thrown that out and we don't want to bring that into the church. Why? Because there might be conflict, there might be confrontation. We wouldn't be warm and fuzzy. It might not be really comfortable, we might not be secure if we have that accountability thing going. And yet the Christian faith is all about accountability.

Then, thirdly, you look at the nature of the teaching that we are getting and our commitment to growing in our faith. As you suggest, most people do not really spend very much time or devote very much effort to any kind of systematic, long term, goal-oriented study of what Scripture teaches. We found that very few Christians really have any kinds of goals for what kind of believer or spiritual person they want to become, which is kind of like constantly making it up as we go along.

Crosswalk: What role do you think small groups or cell groups play in that? I'm kind of surprised by a statistic that one out of six American adults is involved in some kind of a small group.

Barna: Surprised in what way?

Crosswalk: It seems kind of high, but even if one out of six are involved it seems that with small groups, they do tend to focus a lot on the touchy feely. Then you say that your prediction for the next ten years is that many more Sunday school programs will shut down. Would you say that the shift of the church from Sunday school programs is helping or hurting the church?

Barna: One of the things that research has shown us is that even though more churches are moving towards small groups, those small groups may be doing more to inhibit peoples' spiritual growth than to facilitate that growth. Part of the reason is that, first of all, in most groups, you have an individual who's in charge of the group or leading the group who really doesn't know Scripture very well. So if they're leading a discussion or trying to teach things, more often than not, what you wind up with is heresy rather than Christian orthodoxy.

The group dynamics I think lend themselves well to building deeper relationships. There is great potential for accountability, but we're not doing a very good job at that accountability, because, of course, most people don't have any goals that they can be held accountable for in terms of spiritual growth. The hope is that we can make people feel like they're really part of the church if they are integrated into this smaller, more intimate group that meets at a more comfortable time and a more comfortable place. But we found that, frankly, small groups are not a

very effective means for communicating the truths of the faith. They're much better for helping people think through the applications that maybe they've been taught in another venue.

Crosswalk: Do you think that if individuals learned to be more biblically savvy, learned more about the Bible, that small groups would be more effective?

Barna: I think it's certainly possible. I think we must get people to take Scripture more seriously and to ... be serious about then integrating those principles into their life practices. Anything that would get us to do that, I think, would be beneficial.

Crosswalk: Would you suggest that churches change as rapidly as they can with the cultural trends for churches? For instance, the rise in mega-churches over the last decade. Should more churches have attempted to become mega-churches in order to survive?

Barna: Absolutely not. Mega-churches are not the silver bullet that we're looking for in the Christian community. There are some wonderful examples where large churches are doing great ministry. But there are also a number of examples where large churches have just become comfortable places for people to come and feel like they have done their duty and now they're off the hook for another week. So mega-churches, in and of themselves, have no particular value. You have to look at each ministry and evaluate it individually.

Should churches be changing as quickly as the culture is? Well, every church has its own particular culture and it attracts a particular kind of person. It has an individual or group of people who are providing, hopefully, a particular type or direction of leadership. To constantly be a chameleon, changing from week to week to week simply to accommodate the culture has its own problems endemic in that process.

I think what makes more sense is that churches be organized around the particular vision that God has entrusted to the leaders, and that the church remain true to that vision. Which means, of course, that churches throughout our country would have to stop sniping at each other and recognize that the kingdom of God is made up of many different types of ministries. People are no longer going to put up with each church basically being the same. Individuals, particularly younger generations,

are saying, 'You know what, it's got to be genuine. It's got to be authentic. It has to reflect who I am, what I need, where I'm going.' So you are going to see all these other models: the house church; the cyber church; the boutique churches; faith communes; eschatological forums; marketplace affinity groups and so forth.

I'm hoping we'll be shaken out of our lethargy regarding the comfortableness, and the stability of the Christian church.

Crosswalk: *Don't you think something is lost if everyone who is 30-something with two or three little kids all congregate to one church, while another church attracts all the high schoolers in the area? Or do you think that is fine as long as each church is teaching Scripture accurately?*

Barna: Well, we've got to be practical about this too. It's a really nice, I think, kind of politically correct notion to say, well, it's inappropriate to have a church where you've got a single demographic: everybody looks, thinks, and feels the same. But on the other side of the coin, let's recognize, too, that people are going to make their decisions based upon what works for them.

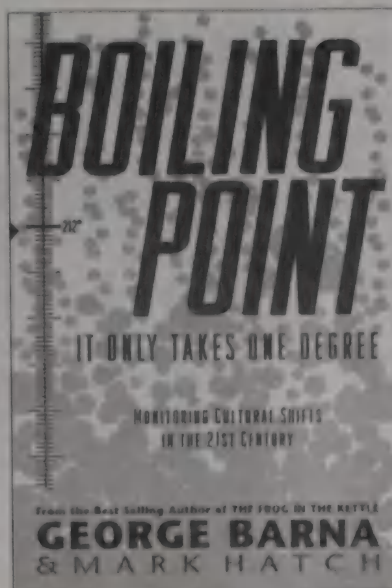
What we know, for instance, is that white people don't like to worship with black people and black people don't like to worship with

white people. Can we therefore say it's not OK to have a church that's multicultural? Everything has to be multicultural? We can say that, but then we're going to have a lot of empty churches and miss a lot of opportunities to minister to people.

What may make sense is to draw people to a ministry that they can relate to and where they can learn and grow. We can say we want people of all ages worshipping together at the same time. Well, it just not going happen for the most part. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all ministry. But within a church, we can offer many different styles and formats without compromising the basic principles that we're trying to communicate.

Crosswalk: *How do you think that churches will grow and what do you think they will look like in the next 10 years?*

Barna: Well, as I was noting before, there are so many different models of churches. But, what are they going to look like when they come together? They're not all going to be meeting on Sunday morning. They're not all going to have the introductory music and then the preaching and the announcements and the turn and greet and then we hit the parking lot. There will be many different ways in which these places express their faith and experience their faith and allow people to interact with each other. So how will they grow? Primarily on the basis of word of mouth and relationships. Apart



from that I'm not sure that we know very much about how exactly it is going to look.

Crosswalk: *In your book you talk about boutique ministries springing up that will focus on meeting one particular need of Christians. Christians will then go around selecting what they need on a particular Sunday or a particular week. Do you think that's a good thing for churches to promote?*

Barna: I'm not really judging them per se; I'm simply noting that that is almost an inevitability in our culture. I think that, certainly, one

of the things that we have seen is that when people become too unidimensional they don't really understand the faith, they can't really live the faith, they don't really grow as complete, mature believers.

So I think it would be a tragedy if ... the boutique ministries failed to encourage people to get integrated into other boutique ministries that are focusing on other dimensions of the Christian faith. We will be creating really diseased Christians, in a way. So part of the responsibility will come back to the leaders of the boutique ministries to help people understand that we are

grateful that you like what we are doing here but there is so much more to the Christian faith that is offered in these other venues.

Crosswalk: *George, what is the one thing that you hope Christians can take away from reading your book, Boiling Point?*

Barna: I guess I'm hoping we'll be shaken out of our lethargy regarding the comfortableness, and the security, and the stability of the Christian church. I don't think that Christ died on the cross to create a stable institution. He died on the cross to help us understand that the world is a wicked

place and we are wicked individuals at our bottom level. We have to be transformed and there is only one way of that happening, but that is not happening in America today.

The church is not having much influence, and largely it's because we don't anticipate the future, we wait until it happens. We complain and we try to change history but it doesn't work. So can we understand the values that people possess and how, even within the church, we may not understand it? We have abandoned a lot of core principles. Can we understand that we are living now in an age of moral and spiritual anarchy and it is not simply OK to go to church and hope that things will work out for the best? They're not working out for the best, and each of us has a responsibility to do something about that.

Can we understand the nature of that responsibility? Can we understand the different generations and why they don't understand each other and why they don't work together? Same thing with our different ethnic groups. Can we look at the possibilities of really being the church that Christ envisioned that really had so little to do with bricks and mortar, but had so much to do with what's going on with people's hearts? I'm hoping the book will really bother people and bother them enough to say, "You know what? We are missing the point. We've got to rethink, re-strategize how it is that we are going about trying to make faith real in America today."

Barna: To influence culture Christians must alter their priorities

Barna Research Group

VENTURA, Calif. — According to researcher George Barna, the Christian Church is struggling to influence the nation's culture because "believers think of themselves as individuals first, Americans second, and Christians third. Until these priorities are changed, the church will continue to lose influence, and biblical principles will represent simply one more option among the numerous worldviews that Americans may choose from."

Barna's comments were made during an interview regarding his newest book, *Boiling Point* (Regal Books, Ventura, Calif.), which examines the nation's current cultural condition and projects what life will be like a decade from now. Barna explained that he and co-author Mark Hatch wrote the book to help Christians anticipate the future and have a greater potential

for directing the flow of the culture, rather than to be surprised and influenced by it.

Demographic shifts

Barna identifies a series of trends that will require new ministry strategies. For instance, the United States will have the world's third-largest population of senior citizens by 2010; a college education will increasingly be treated as the minimum credential for jobs that transcend the minimum wage, yet the cost of receiving a Bachelor's degree from a private college will average more than \$150,000; crime rates will rise throughout this decade; and racial animosity and race-related violence will escalate in the next decade.

Barna's work also underscores the growing generation gap that has led Americans to define themselves in relation to how they differ from others rather than on the basis

of shared attributes. The book outlines more than three dozen dimensions on which the five generations in America differ. As examples, the author cites reactions to authority (older Americans accept it, Boomers want to control it, Busters ignore it), handling contradictions (elder citizens ignore them, Boomers strive to solve them, Busters appreciate them), and life fears (uselessness worries Seniors; Boomers fear being out of control and powerless; while Busters are troubled by emotional abandonment). Understanding the generational distinctions and perspectives will be critical toward developing viable ministry strategies and communities of faith, according to Barna.

Moral and spiritual anarchy

In a previous book, Barna warned that America was rapidly

devolving into a society beset by moral anarchy. In his new volume, he flatly states that moral anarchy has arrived and rules our culture today. The argument hinges on a substantial amount of attitudinal and behavioral evidence: record bankruptcy levels, frivolous lawsuits, the rapid growth of the pornography industry, highway speeding as the norm, income tax cheating, computer hacking and viruses, rising levels of white collar crime, rampant copyright violations (movies, books, recordings), terrorism and intimidation tactics, Net-based plagiarism, emotional comfort with lying and cheating, increasing rates of co-habitation and adultery, and so forth.

In *Boiling Point*, Barna takes the argument further and suggests that the United States is now in a state of spiritual anarchy as well. Millions of people's faith activity is no longer affected by parameters

such as church loyalty, respect for clergy, acceptance of absolutes, tolerance of Christianity, reverence for God, a desire to strive for personal holiness, sensitivity to theological heresy, or appreciation of tradition. The rejection of these elements has created a void that has been filled by the customized spirituality that lacks biblical moorings.

Future faith

Virtually every dimension of people's lifestyles is undergoing serious transitions, and the faith arena is clearly no exception. In one chapter, Barna describes forthcoming models of churches, ranging from house churches and the cyberchurch to faith communes and marketplace affinity groupings. He predicts that the fastest growth during the coming decade will be among various

See BARN page 16...

Caregiving

A ministry of one

Carmen Leal

"One filled with joy preaches without preaching." — Mother Teresa.

Loretta always knew her son, Marc, was destined for ministry. Even when she wanted to throttle her son for some infraction of a rule, she still knew God called Marc for a special purpose. As a teenager, Marc loved going to church, retreats, and reading the Bible.

Loretta was wrong about Marc being ordained, but Marc is still doing God's work.

Marc and his fraternal twin, Scott, were born on July 15, 1975. When Loretta married Marc's father, Ron, in 1974, she knew his grandmother had Huntington's Disease. No one ever explained anything about this disease that would ultimately change their lives forever.

Experiencing pain

However, Loretta experienced pain even before there was an official title attached to Ron's behavior. "I thought I was living with a man with depression and anger who chose not to do anything about it," she shares. "Now I know he was sick."

By the time the twins turned 18, she knew their father had Huntington's Disease. Worse, she understood that each of her precious children had a 50 per cent chance of also having the gene. Loretta asked them both if they wanted to be tested, but they each decided they didn't want to know.

As Marc began exhibiting more and more symptoms, Loretta again asked him if he would like to be tested. Again, Marc said no. Marc graduated from high school in 1993 and joined the army. After receiving an honorable discharge following three years of service, Marc joined the National Guard where he stayed for one year. Marc dearly wanted to be a pilot, as against his mother's wishes; he joined the navy in March of 1998.

Pursuing a dream

Loretta remembers a conversation she had with Marc when he decided to pursue his dream. "When he made the decision to enter the navy, I told him he had a moral and ethical obligation to be tested so that he put no other sailors, or citizens at risk because of his movements. Guns, bombs, and HD are not a good combination."

In hindsight, Loretta says she should have stepped in and told the recruiter of her concerns. Marc felt

this was his last opportunity to learn to fly so off he went to the Navy. Barely a month into training, he could no longer stand in formation. Facing the inevitable, Marc asked to be sent to a doctor, but his sergeant sent him to a psychiatrist instead. The sergeant thought he was just trying to get out of serving his country. The psychiatrist interviewed Marc and knew immediately Marc was sick. That visit ultimately led to a correct diagnosis and an honorable medical discharge and a new chapter of his life and the lives of his family began.

A second caregiver

In addition to Loretta, Marc is blessed with a second caregiver, his stepfather, David Bialas. A firefighter who loves and cares for Marc along side Loretta, David hurts as any father would to see his son suffer. David's teenage daughter, Amber, has also seen someone she cares for slowly decline.

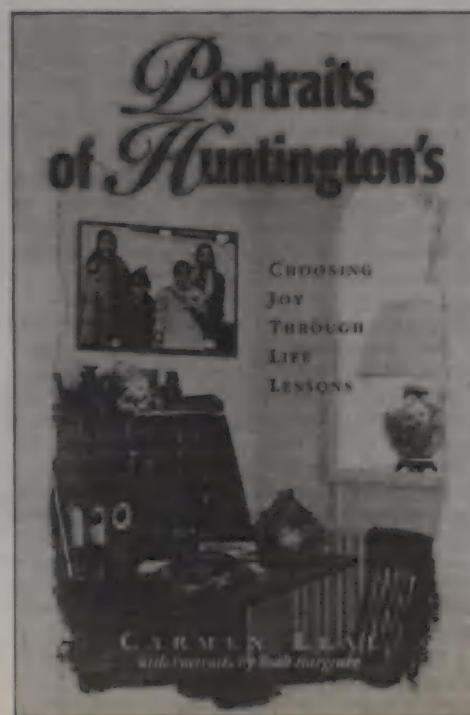
For Marc, the worst part of Huntington's Disease is not the chorea or the inability to take care of his needs. The worst part is the loneliness. "Marc really misses going out with his friends or having a cup of strong coffee," says Loretta. "Instead his day consists of watching television or listening to the radio. But mostly he stares into space in the dark. I wonder, what he is thinking about?"

Understanding, time, love

Marc's loneliness is something echoed by thousands of Huntington's Disease sufferers around the world. In far too many cases, friends stop calling or coming over. Their lives move on and there's no time to think about people like Marc who simply want a visit now and then. Loretta and David work hard to make Marc's life as full as possible but it's hard. All it takes is three qualities; understanding, time, and love.

Those three qualities are what trained volunteers, known as Stephen Ministers, have to offer. Marc was on a waiting list for quite a while before a volunteer named John, from Christ United Methodist Church, became a part of Marc's life. Now they don't know what they would do without John, who Marc considers his best friend.

John, and other members of the Stephen ministry, prayed for a computer to help the family communicate with other Huntington's Disease families around the world. Through God's grace, a computer genius from the University of Texas built a computer for them.



The computer and John both help in the increasing loneliness of the disease.

Humor and pathos

Edwin Percy Whipple said, "Whenever you find humor, you find pathos close by his side," and this is true in this family. Certainly they have had their share of grief, but they also laugh.

We say it's funny Marc got his "PhD" without attending college. (PhD is short hand for "person with Huntington's Disease.")

Marc's chorea has become a source of humor as well. Whenever Marc falls and his body is jerking uncontrollably, he says "I feel like a fish flapping out of water," and they all laugh hysterically.

Loretta remembers a not-so-funny time for her that had her son laughing uncontrollably. "Marc loves to go to amusement parks and ride roller coasters. A year ago, we took Marc to the Fort Bend County Fair and he wanted to go on some of the rides. He could enjoy himself as long as we got him on and off the rides.

"I got him on one ride that spins around and goes up and down and makes you want to throw up," continues Loretta. "Just as I got Marc on the ride, the operator closed the door and I got stuck with Marc inside of the ride. He thought it was funny, but I was fuming I was yelled, 'I'm going to kill you when I get you home!'"

"I felt awful telling my

terminally ill son I would kill him. Then I saw all the children listening to me with Marc laughing. Unfortunately, I continued as the ride went faster and faster. It was a terrible ride but it made Marc laugh."

Ultimately though, what gives Marc and his family the strength to get through one more day is their faith. Mother Teresa said, "I see God in every human being." That is exactly how Loretta feels.

"I see the face of God in Marc," shares Loretta. "As I feed, bathe and take care of Marc, who is one of God's special children, I serve God."

Marc serves God by simply being Marc. He has come through the stages of grief and now accepts that he has Huntington's Disease and a cure might come too late for him. But he also knows that his life is far from over and he still has a job to do.

Simple, childlike faith

With simple, childlike faith, Marc knows having this particular terminal illness can be used to bring others to God. Marc is very serious about his love for the Lord and he feels compelled to share with everyone and help convert them. He has given talks to several church youth groups and most recently gave his testimony to a group of 40 people at Calvary Baptist Church in Rosenberg, Texas.

Marc is very clear that his purpose in life is to bring glory and honor to God. He knows without a doubt that through this disease others are seeing the face of Christ. Marc received a telephone call from the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Office asking him to come speak to the youth. He is excited about talking to them and also about volunteering their home for youth community service.

Though her son's life has taken a different path than anyone could have anticipated, Loretta is as proud as any parent. "My favorite

thing is to watch Marc with the neighborhood children, all five and under. They gather around Marc and he takes them for rides on his wheelchair. They unabashedly give him kisses and hugs and their childish drawings. They adorn the walls of his room.

"Marc is sad that he will never have children of his own, but God has made sure he does have children in his life," says Loretta. "Marc has often said if one child, just one child, makes a choice to change their life, what a gift this world will be given."

People beyond Marc's family and neighbors know what a special young man he is. At the 2000 convention in Orlando, Florida, Marc was given an award by the Huntington's Disease Society of America. The plaque says, "HDSA Honors Marc Church, HDSA Person of the Year for example to others living with Huntington's Disease June 10, 2000."

Role reversal

In a reversal from the normal caregiver patient roles, Marc gave comfort to the caregivers at the last support group meeting. Feeling tired and lonely, those caring for their loved ones with Huntington's Disease got a mini-sermon from Marc.

"God challenges us to be more like Him," explained Marc. "If we become too comfortable in our own skin, then we cannot be open to change and acceptance." As usual Marc was able to put things into proper perspective.

Marc is comfortable when talking about his mortality. To Marc, what ultimately matters is not how long you live, but what you do with your time on this earth. He also knows God loves him and forgave him his sins.

I think Marc is hand picking who spends eternity with him in Heaven. He's hand-delivering invitations to them, one person at a time. Marc truly is in ministry. Every day of his life.

Carmen Leal is the author of Portraits of Huntington's and Faces of Huntington's, (Essence, 2001, 1998), a book for and about people with Huntington's Disease, and others who care. She is the co-author of Pinches of Salt, Prisms of Light, (Essence, 1999), a collection of writings about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. For more information about Portraits of Huntington's and Huntington's Disease visit www.writerspeaker.com/portraits.html This article was written as a special for ASSIST News Service.

News/Family

More 'Christian-bashing' in India

Abhijeet Prabhu

BANGALORE, India (Compass) — Three Catholic nuns escorting orphan children on a picnic were severely beaten with sticks and cudgels by over 30 Hindu activists in Dahod town of Gujarat state on August 25. When the nuns went to lodge a complaint at the police station, their drivers were beaten by the police, according to a statement by the All India Christian Council executive member, Samson Christian.

The nuns, from an orphanage run by the I.P. Mission in Jobat village of Jhabua district in the neighboring state of Madhya Pradesh, were accompanying the orphans on a visit to the Kali Dam near Dahod.

The four vehicles carrying the picnickers halted near a shop in Dahod for refreshments when

some of the children became nauseated. One of the nuns, Sister Anju Ashwin, then took the children to wash their faces at a nearby hand pump, which happened to be adjacent to a gas station owned by a leader and activist of the local Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP, or World Hindu Organization).

Christian said that as the gas pump owner was arguing with the nun, about 30 VHP and Bajrang Dal workers gathered and started to beat the nuns with sticks and cudgels, then confiscated the keys of their vehicles. The workers asked them "to get out of Dahod immediately." The Hindu activists also beat up the Muslim drivers of the vehicles.

Police refused to help

In their distress, the nuns spotted a senior police officer driving

past, stopped his vehicle and asked him to help them. But the official, seeing the VHP leader, refused to intervene and told them to lodge a complaint at the city police station.

However, the police personnel not only refused to lodge a complaint, they summoned the drivers and started beating them and the sisters for arguing with the VHP and Bajrang Dal workers. One of the drivers fled in fear, leaving his vehicle behind.

The Catholic sisters returned to Jobat later that night and registered a complaint with the Jobat police, who have sent the file to the Dahod superintendent of police.

Jhabua Additional Superintendent of Police Mr. R.P. Bisone confirmed that the case was registered against those who beat up the nuns. The nuns had reportedly mentioned that their attackers had

opposed their visit to Dahod on the pretext that the nuns had come to Dahod to convert the local people, he added.

On August 13, another nun and a missionary were beaten by Hindu fundamentalists in south Gujarat in the Pipalwada village of Vyara Taluka.

In a letter to the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, Christian described how Rev. Nathaniel Logoraj and his son from the Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB) were attacked while they were traveling by motorcycle in the neighboring Jhabua village. Hindus in a religious procession threw colored water and mud at them.

As the two Christians were returning home later in the day, people in the same procession blocked their way and beat them. Sister Mary Stella and Sanjivbhai, who came to their rescue, were also assaulted. They escaped and took refuge in a nearby girl's hostel.

Chapel attacked by Hindus

Meanwhile on August 27 in Jhabua district, a chapel was attacked and razed by pro-Hindu tribals at a village called Mehndikheda.

The Hindu tribals approached the chapel during a prayer service and asked the worshippers to stop praying as there had been no rain in the area for quite some time and praying to their God would not ease the situation. They then attacked the chapel.

When a group of priests later visited the damaged chapel, a dispute erupted between them and the villagers, and a priest was beaten. Fr. Thomas filed a complaint against the villagers, and a counter

complaint was filed by a local person against Thomas, said Neeraj Mandloi, the district collector.

Fifteen persons have been arrested for damaging a place of worship, he added, stating that "the situation was tense, but normal, in the village."

In yet another incident also in the state of Madhya Pradesh on August 27, a pastor and members of his congregation were mercilessly thrashed by Hindu activists in Badadra village in Alirajpur Taluka.

Samson Christian reported from Badadra that the pastor, Rev. Raisingh of the Philadelphia church, and three others were attacked by VHP activists at a makeshift local church, which is a hall belonging to Maganbhai. When Maganbhai intervened, he was also attacked.

Maganbhai has been admitted to the Alirajpur civil hospital. The Alirajpur police have registered a complaint against the local VHP leader and others, but no arrests have been made. The incidents of "Christian-bashing" in the villages on the Gujarat-Madhya Pradesh border have been increasing, Christian said.

Meanwhile, at midnight the same day in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, 43 tombs were ravaged in a Christian cemetery in Anakapalli town of the Visakhapatnam district.

Police arrested three persons, including the president of the Hindu Samshana Vaatika Samrakshana Samithi (Hindu Crematorium Ground Protection Society), Mr. S.S.N. Raju, following a complaint from the United Pastors Fellowship president, Francis K. Sudhakar, and three others.

Learning it the hard way

I think it was through the writings of Oswald Chambers that I was first introduced to the idea that if God wants to teach us something and we miss his point, he will simply repeat the message (in various forms) until we finally understand.

The first time I really learned that nothing in this world is permanent was when my father became terminally ill. I was 19 at the time. The ordeal could well have been devastating, but somehow God used it to draw me closer to him. Don't misunderstand. I'm not suggesting for a minute that the purpose of my father's death was to catapult me into Christianity. Nonetheless, the sad fact of my father's mortality stirred in me the deep desire to connect with something eternal.

A new perspective of life

My father's death also produced in me a new perspective of life. Priorities were re-evaluated. I began for the first time to think in terms of the "big picture." Of course, as time wears on, a certain complacency sets in. Life, quite naturally, returns to normal. Still, a lesson well learned is easily recalled when its underlying truths surface in daily life.

Those truths were never more vivid to me than on September 11, 2001. As I watched the twin towers of the Trade Center in New York collapse, I could not help thinking of how fragile and fleeting life on this planet is. To witness those monumental buildings transformed into piles of rubble within a few minutes was beyond anything I could have imagined. To be honest, it took some time for me to fully grasp that I wasn't seeing just the special effects of a Hollywood movie.

My mother, on the other hand, was quick to recognize what she was seeing. That's because she lived through World War II in Europe. More than once during that war she left her well-built home in the morning to spend the day in an air raid shelter. One of those times, she returned home to find nothing but a heap of bricks and broken glass.

Intangible Things

Heidi VanDerSlikke

People who have lived through a war view the world through different eyes.

Less than a week after the terrorist attacks, we received word that one of our church members had been killed in a car accident. This is the fourth death in our congregation this year. The funeral was sad, but the testimony of his children and grandchildren bore witness to this man's strong faith. We do not grieve as people without hope. Therein lies the bigger and better lesson God has graciously taught me. Time and time again, I need to be reminded of his presence in whatever circumstances may come my way in this life, and his promise to be with me for all eternity.

This week it's my turn to teach the Catechism lesson. We're starting off another year with Q&A 1. A lot of churches these days don't bother with doctrine anymore. Even in Reformed circles many people think of the Heidelberg Catechism as "boring." Sometimes you wonder if it's worth the effort teaching teenagers the same old lessons over and over again. But after the events of the past few weeks I must say I feel like I have a truly important mission in presenting Q&A 1. How crucial for God's people to know the answer to the question, "What is your only comfort in life and in death?"

And when I look out at those 30 or so young faces and some of them start to glaze over the minute I begin speaking, I'll pray that God in his mercy will keep presenting this lesson, over and over (in various forms) until they finally get it. Just as he did with me.



Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harrison, Ont.

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Opinion/Christians and Society

Why I don't hate cell phones anymore



Ron de Boer

A few months back, I went on a rant about how much I hated cell phones. Not only did I offend several of my cell phone-using friends, but, apparently, I also insulted my aunt, whom I mentioned as spending hours on the phone with my mother when I was a kid. Well, two retractions today. First, sorry, Aunt Audrey. I hope you'll still offer me one of those chocolate things you're so good at baking at the next family reunion. Second, more seriously, I've been forced to re-think my position on cell phones in the shadow of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington a few weeks ago.

Cell phones for security

CBC radio reported a sharp rise in cell phone sales in Canada in the week following the World Trade Center (WTC) disaster. "The cell phone," said the analyst, "will no longer be seen as a communications device but will be seen as a security device." My first reaction, of course, was to scoff at the radio. I wanted to tell the analyst how we only think the cell phone is a security device but really it just enables us to feel falsely safe. I wanted to tell him that the cell phone didn't

save one person at the WTC or Pentagon in September. I wanted to say we're simply buying into a shrewdly marketed idea that cell phone industry leaders are using the disaster to sell more phones. I wanted to alert him to the story of how a northern Canadian town where crime was non-existent and where folks regularly left their keys in the car ignition overnight became increasingly scared once satellite dishes brought in the nightly news from Detroit. After months of watching arsons, murders, and assaults on the streets of Detroit, everyone in the small town began locking their car doors, began staying in at night, began reinforcing bolt locks. The media, I wanted to say to that analyst on my van radio, has created the fear.

I also wanted to point out the irony of our technological culture. We're afraid of terrorism brought forward via technology, yet it is technology that protects us. That a jet airliner could be used to knock down a Babel-like 121-storey technological wonder like the WTC is still astounding to me. But in defence against terrorism, we depend on the technological gods to save us. In a sense, we, like the terrorists, celebrate the same technology to reach our goals. God must shake his head at us mere, fallible humans. I wanted to say all this, but, of course, being in my van, I would need a cell phone to call the radio station.

But, like you, I imagine, I had no ideological fight left in me. Numbly, I watched the terrible images on CNN, listened to the reasoned perspectives on CBC radio. As I absorbed the accounts of men and women in the towers and on the airplanes — people who used

their cell phones to call wives, husbands, and children to speak with them for the last time; as I listened to stories of friends and family members calling each other to say they loved one another because they knew they were going to die; as I surveyed the lightning speed communication between police, fire-fighters, and leaders in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania, I was humbled by my own short-sightedness.

Vital link to loved ones

Because of the cell phone, Barbara Olsen, a passenger on Flight 93 which crashed in Pennsylvania, was able to tell her husband, Senator Ted Olsen, what the terrorists looked like and how they were conducting business. Ted Olsen was able to tell his wife, via cell phone, that two planes had already crashed into the World Trade Center. Another passenger on flight 93, Tom Burnet, was able to call his wife to tell her he loved her and that he and several other passengers were going to take down the terrorists to thwart a plane crash. Apparently, they did. The plane, on course to wipe out the White House, exploded in farmland in rural Pennsylvania. You could argue that the cell phone saved the lives of some of the top political minds in America.

Yet another passenger on flight 93, Todd Beamer, a devout Christian, phoned 911, speaking to the operator for fifteen minutes about the situation on the airplane. Beamer, knowing the end was near, asked the operator to say the Lord's Prayer with him and then Psalm 23. Then, according to the operator, Todd Beamer prayed to God for guidance before joining in on the attack of the terrorists. His

wife, Lisa Beamer, a pregnant widow with two pre-schoolers, appeared on every major network the following week, praising God and delivering a message of acceptance of God's plan for her life. Her testimony was powerful. You could argue the cell phone has allowed for a powerful presentation of a Christian's faith on national television when all the world was watching.

Because of the cell phone, folks in the Second World Trade Center tower could phone home to relatives watching television coverage of the first plane crash in Tower One. People at home, via cell phones, told workers in the tower to vacate the building and get to safety. Wonder of wonders, television, too, is to be praised. It was television that gave us instant up-to-the-minute coverage of the goings in New York and Washington. Perhaps, you could argue, this coverage served only to satisfy our curiosity here in Canada; but for New Yorkers, the information given on television saved people's lives.

The TV connection

And it was television that gave so many people hope in the days following the collapse of the towers. Pictures of sisters, brothers, fathers, and grandmothers were shown to New Yorkers in the hopes that someone might recognize someone else who had escaped the towers. And, like radio during the second world war, television served as the conduit for president Bush's words of comfort, grief and purpose to the American people. They desperately needed that. Here in Canada, Prime Minister Jean Chretien was able, thanks to television, to

convey his fear and grief before our very eyes and then pledge allegiance to the United States in their fight against terrorism. These larger-than-life figures were no different from us, sharing with us a common tragedy. It felt good to hear their voices, see their faces, watch them make decisions in the midst of crisis. Television truly brought us all together.

But, alas, this same technology is almost too good, too flawless. We were able to see the airplane crash into Tower Two countless times and from three different angles; that image is indelibly printed in my mind, archived in digital-historical vaults until eternity. Those with loved ones on those planes or in those buildings, will have to endure watching their deaths over and over again. The voices of those victims who left messages on loved ones' voice mail moments before death will haunt those left behind forever. Nothing is said and gone anymore; no action is delivered one-time to be remembered only by memory. Technology has preserved it all. There's something haunting about that. I don't know about you, but I can't look at a jet or a high rise building without thinking something is going to happen.

God, of course, gives us technology and, as with the tree in Eden, humans can choose to use technology for good or evil. The terrorists chose to use technology for evil reasons; but others used technology to thwart disaster and convey love.

So, the media and technology critic is giving credit where credit is due. Today, we celebrate cell phones and television. When they were needed most, they were most helpful.

Barna: Christians should boldly lead culture

... continued from page 13

non-Christian faith groups, while one of the dominant trends within the Christian community will be that of ecumenism. The California-based author acknowledged the widespread awareness of mega-churches, but foresees a cooling down of the public's appetite for large congregations, predicting a growing fondness for mid-sized congregations.

Providing a wealth of statistics from his national studies, Barna also points out that the spiritual beliefs of Christians are continuing to stray from biblical teaching. Among the specific beliefs alluded to in the book are the majorities who believe that the Bible teaches

"God helps those who help themselves," that the Holy Spirit is a symbol of God's power and presence but not a living entity, that Satan does not exist, and that there are many paths by which a person may experience eternal salvation.

Technology rules

As the U.S. continues to shift into a service-based, information-rich, technology-driven economy, the signs point to every aspect of people's lives being substantially reshaped by new advances in technology, medicine and communications. Barna projects coming changes such as a proliferation of smart houses, widespread acceptance of elec-

tronic money, global competition for local jobs, ubiquitous computing, real-time language translation software, the harvesting of body parts, gene therapy, chip implants, and life span expansion through genetic manipulation.

Based on his research, Barna suggests that among the numerous changes resulting from new technologies, ministries will have to reconsider their scheduling. "In a 24/7 world, Sunday at 11:00 a.m. simply won't work for many people. Similarly, anchoring a church's ministry offerings to a physical ministry campus won't work for increasing numbers of Americans. Flexibility and creativity will be crucial ingredients to

successful ministries in the future."

When asked why he and Hatch wrote the book, Barna replied, "We hope it will serve as an informative wake-up call to believers. The Christian Church is losing influence. Non-believers are unimpressed by sermons and events; they want to see what difference faith has made in our lives — and they are struggling to see that impact. If Christianity is to represent a viable and compelling alternative to the prevalent options available in our society today, then believers must model its application and effect for others."

Barna also hopes the book will encourage Christians. "Realize

that as difficult as it is for a Christian to demonstrate authentic Christianity, non-Christians are struggling with the same issues, pressures, concerns and challenges — but without a viable faith perspective to guide them. Christians have an incredible opportunity to help Americans face a daunting future with confidence and joy by showing the fruit of applied biblical truths and principles. But we cannot be effective unless we understand our context and boldly lead our culture to a higher plane."

George Barna is the CEO of the Barna Research Group, Ltd., an independent marketing research company located in southern California.

Cross Border Broodings

Sovereignty in tragedy

Tymen Hofman

The terrorist blow struck at the heart of American power on September 11 defies further description. Everything has already been shown and said. All that remains for us is to think about and reflect on the deeper aspects of what has befallen us — not only in the U.S.A. but in the whole free world. Even our best insights will fall far short of satisfying our need for clarity and truth. Everything has radically changed. Our world will never be the same again. We now look at life through very different eyes and with radically new perspectives. Few of us have the ability to speak with any authority on the multitude of issues that cry for insight. It is a time for humility.

The one area about which we as Christians should be able to say something is how all this is related to God's ways with his world. We greatly need some good insight into this.

The need is great because everyone is looking for answers to the question of *why* this has happened. What does God have to do with this? Is it his judgment? Upon the world? Upon the great sinners among us? Upon us? Is the end of the world at hand?

One thing is clear — it is a sign that Jesus is coming again but it says nothing about *when* he will come! We need always to expect him and take comfort in his promise to return and deliver us. We may yet live for generations expecting him. That expectation is essential to our comfort.

The Sovereign Bullet

But just how are we to look at God's role in this disaster? We confess him as the sovereign Lord of all. He rules. I heard a Muslim cleric say that God (Allah) did this. Some Christian speculation is not far from such a position. But it is a gross simplification of the truth of God's sovereignty and essentially false. At this point I would continue with the essence of what I had already written before September 11. I had entitled it *The Sovereign Bullet*.

It was about the tragic shooting down of a missionary aircraft by the Peruvian Airforce last summer. The Peruvians were being assisted by a CIA patrol in the program to intercept and stop the flow of drugs out of Peru. The wife and

baby daughter of the missionary were killed by the same bullet. The pilot was severely wounded but managed to bring the riddled aircraft into a landing of sorts near the shore of a lake. Jim and Roni Bowers were missionaries from our neighboring city of Muskegon, Michigan and for some time the story totally dominated our news. The funeral service was completely aired on national television. The whole incident was, at one and the same time, a colossal blunder and tragic waste of life, and a marvelous showing forth of the faith and compassion of the young missionary and the church which supported him and his family.

Near the end of the memorial service, Jim Bowers spoke most movingly, demonstrating his amazing faith and freedom from anger and condemnation. His was a mighty testimony to the grace of God which sent him to Peru and which kept him in the darkest hours. He gave striking evidence of a faith that puts full confidence in the Lord and giver of life.

In that light it is difficult if not unseemly, to say something critical of his words, but a sense of integrity in assessing what he said leads me to do so nonetheless. I refer to his analysis of the shot that killed his wife and baby daughter when he called it a "sovereign bullet." He said, in all simplicity and reality, that God was directing that bullet in his sovereignty. And I have real problems with that. It is as though God was pulling the trigger in that Peruvian fighter plane. Jim Bowers never mentioned the Peruvian pilot and his careless disregard for the plane he shot down with all who were in it. He didn't reflect on the failure of people to carry out their responsibilities faithfully. He just found rest and peace and a certain sense of fulfillment in having been touched by

God's sovereignty in the death of his family. He didn't factor in an evil world.

God was not the gunner

Now we were tempted to overlook this and rejoice in his faith. After all we are in the hand of a sovereign God! Wasn't Bowers just being a good Christian who believes in God's sovereignty? Why should anyone, especially a Calvinist, be critical of his words? Don't we believe in God's sovereignty? And the answer is: "Yes, but..."

Yes, but God doesn't fire guns at helpless missionaries working to do his will. It was in some sense the Devil directing that bullet via an irresponsible gunner destroying a mother and child very dear to the heart of God. God doesn't do evil, for to do evil is sin, and that was an evil act. God was not the gunner!

Obviously we are getting deeply into an impenetrable paradox at this point, one we can never satisfactorily explain. But that does not give us the right to dismiss the paradox and claim only one side of it to be true.

Now it is a fact that we who are Calvinists so easily slip into this same error, using different words, but with the same import. And we often do it when we are trying to explain the unexplainable tragedies of life. We most often do it when the tragedy strikes others. When we want to comfort someone in deep sorrow and loss we so easily make God the leading actor on the scene.

When a young wife loses her husband and is left with little children and someone says: "God took him, and he doesn't make any mistakes!" those are possibly the cruelest words that could have been spoken. For not only is the young woman struggling to keep her faith in God, but someone comes and gives God all the blame.

It's like the minister who, at the funeral of an air force pilot killed in a mid-air crash, declared: "God saw him in the sky and called out, 'Bill, come home'." That may be hyper-Calvinism but it isn't being truly biblical, or truly Calvinistic.

Now I do not wish to disparage God's sovereignty. I'm only saying we must view it correctly so that we see his sovereignty as assuring us that evil will not win the day, that God's mercy and grace will overcome, and that "nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ, our Lord." (Romans 8)

Like a hyper-Calvinist

What is somewhat amazing is the fact that Jim Bowers would likely not be classified as a Calvinist. The church of which he is a member does not teach the sovereignty of God as the Reformed do. Nor would they profess belief in God's predestination. Yet in the time of tragedy Jim Bower spoke like a hyper-Calvinist. That gives us the key to what is likely a beautiful reality, that all who are true believers are very close together on the wonder of God's directing the affairs of the world and the

church when we are on our knees facing the tragedies of life. We know he has overcome the evil one in the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The victory is the Lord's! Somehow, amid all of our failing understandings of the wonder of God's plans for our good, he is working it all out. He is winning the battle. As a matter of fact, he has already won it in the resurrection glory of our Lord Jesus.

So, through it all, the tragedies, the failures, the sins, God in his grace is overruling evil and causing the kingdom to come. That is really the sovereignty of God — the sovereignty of grace! In the resurrection life, when God will explain all things to us, we will also understand his sovereign rule!



Ty Hofman is a retired minister of the Christian Reformed Church who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

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News Comment



Bert Hielema

NOW, WEEKS AFTER THE horrendous attack on the World Trade Center, in my mind the true consequences for the world are still not clear. I imagine that the thousands of families who have lost loved ones, are slowly coming to realize the voids in their lives, as the tremendous world-wide response is slowly slackening. I am struggling to make sense of this calamity, and questions multiply.

Also questions in my mind whether, with one major item crowding out the news, I should continue to write this column. Somehow it seems that events are so grim, the prospects so dim, the coverage so wide that I can shed little light on the news. Oh, yes, I read a lot, and I have a certain gift, I presume, to sift out what is important and what is not, at least for me. This does not always coincide with what other readers think and, at times, I goof things up. Even though I come through a very self-assured, now I am not so sure of myself, also because I am starting to doubt whether the printed word — or the spoken for that matter — still carries much weight.

Sometimes it seems to me that people, everywhere, can only be reached when a very shocking event takes place, such as the World Trade Center collapse through a sudden terrorist attack, a death in the family, or a severe ill-

ness. And then perhaps only temporarily.

Will this September 11 event have a lasting effect on our lives? So far, the outcome has been numbing, perhaps forcing people to see what is real important in their lives. I heard Sheila Rogers say on CBC "This Morning" that she had been to church for the first time in a thousand years. Will she go again?

HERE IS ONE OF MY brainwaves which may or may not be correct. As Christians we believe that God started human history with Adam and Eve in the very region, generally speaking, where now the next war will be fought. It began there. Will it also end there? The mix is potent. Pakistan has nuclear capability. It also is a country severely divided. Is this a clash of civilizations? Is this a holy war? The Taliban says so and even though the U.S. denies this, the language used has definite religious overtones. President Bush: "They who are not with us, are against us." Jesus said these same words, but Jesus also said, in a typically Jewish ambiguous way: "Whoever is not against us is for us." Jesus left space for fence-sitters and second thoughts, and for people who can't make up their mind too quickly, like me sometimes. The other example of sacred usage was in the code-name: "Operation Infinite Justice," dropped quickly, for a good reason. In my Book, Infinity belongs only to the God Creator.

We know too well that, when we render justice we do it always in a feeble, finite, fallible way.

Because America is deeply religious it is easy to use this sort of language, especially since the U.S.A. sees itself as God's Country, a City on the Hill, a shining example for all to follow. But we must be careful of even hinting at a religious war, because historically they have been among the bloodiest. The 30-year war from 1618-1648 in Germany was classified as a religious war and it is reported that one-third of the population died. In a sense the American Civil war was a moral crusade, not unlike the present war. It was extremely violent as well. So, in spite of justified anger, Bush's words of caution were appropriate. May I add that so far George W. Bush has come through much better than I would have expected initially. I pray that he will continue to listen to Colin Powell, who was intimately involved with the Gulf War, even though this war cannot be fought with stealth bombers, those \$2 billion machines, almost invulnerable high up in the sky. This is a war to be conducted by stealthy bombers, hidden like moles, underground.

EUROPEANS ARE EXPERIENCED in this sort of conflict: Great Britain with the IRA. Germany with its Red Army. Italy, Japan, Russia, all pros in terrorism. Americans are amateurs here. Consider this: after many decades the IRA is still a threat. In London alone there have been seven bombings this year. The European world has been living for decades with the daily chance of being maimed or killed.

This is not a simple thing the U.S.A. gets into. If this were so easy, the IRA — a band of some 100 fanatics — would have been eradicated a long time ago. It is also much more complicated than catching Osama bin Laden dead or alive.

ONE OF MY sources of information — Stratfor Intelligence Services (\$50 US per year, Internet only) — speculates that this man is trapped in Afghanistan and is limited in what he can do. He cannot even make phone calls and has had to resort to courier services to communicate with his associates, because for years the U.S.A. listened in on his conversations. Reports *The Observer*, a London based daily: "The past two years have seen the most

intensive intelligence operation against a single individual. Dozens of satellites monitor every centimetre of Eastern Afghanistan. Eavesdropping equipment listens in to his conversations. Super computers chase details of his banking transactions around the Internet." So his monetary resources are completely mapped out in detail. He has been the object of earlier investigations and his finances have been at most severely limited and it would have been impossible for his bankers to wire funds to operatives in the U.S. without tipping off intelligence agencies.

It is equally likely that the horrendous slaughter at the World Trade Center was the work of members belonging to some of the hundreds of radical Islamic organizations operating around the world. Lately these groups, rather than focusing on local issues, have formed a new world-wide alliance, encompassing all Islamic groups in a loose coalition. This new federation, like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, has ties everywhere and receives moneys from financiers, government officials, diplomats, the military, intelligent agents and former and current guerrilla and militant groups, of which the most prominent is an organization called Al-Qaeda. Its goal is essentially simple. It sees the Islamic world as occupied by non-Islamic forces, either directly or through puppet regimes. Its members wish to end the secular rule and unite Islam.

SO WHAT DO I THINK was the real purpose behind this ferocious attack? It could quite well be that these fanatic Muslims are bent to oust moderate believers and replace them with "true believers." *Jane's Intelligence Review* makes an interesting point. It suggests that the act of terror against the U.S.A. was executed not so much out of hate for America, but to provoke it into severe retaliation and so radicalize local populations and help overthrow the more easy-going Arab regimes, now in power in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Syria and Pakistan. The latter is already threatened with civil war because of the secular stance of the current president. Yasser Arafat, too, is caught between the radical Hamas and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah, which have carried out most of the suicide bombings, and those who want to make peace with Israel. A violent response by the U.S.A. may accomplish the rise to power of Taliban-like regimes.

The United States is the leading power in the world and the patron

of many Islamic regimes. Egypt is the recipient of billions of dollars from the U.S.A. Yet the U.S.A. has to be cautious. I suspect that, if there are large civilian casualties in the Arab countries, already a man or woman — more likely a woman — is ready to release a badge of biological bacteria in some densely populated area for the next round of terror. That place is probably Washington. Just as the World Trade Center became the target again after the first failure, so now the capital could be hit again, because also there the initial attempt was blocked through the heroic efforts of the passengers on the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania. With so many of the terrorists molested years in advance, this possibility seems increasingly likely.

If that were to take place, the anger of the world would make a nuclear response quite likely. The real problem is that even if Afghanistan is secured — which would make a historic first as the British twice and the Russians once were defeated there — and bin Laden killed or captured, its network would continue to function. And with Iraq being a major source, it would probably be the focus of such an attack.

IN THE MEANTIME, THE U.S.A. and possibly Great Britain, will have their Delta Force, their Special Forces, such as the SAS and the Navy seals, all trained to kill and all capable of operating for days on their own in any terrain, in place to root out bin Laden. This is a low-risk, low-cost operation. Failure would not be disastrous; success could be enormous. It could take years but, since the Taliban regime does not have as strong a grip on power as might appear, it is possible, through effective operations, to shorten it, by spreading the sense that they are doomed, in which case the perception might lead to reality. By all indications there will be a guerrilla war, with the U.S.A. orchestrating the underground fighters.

Afghanistan is landlocked, surrounded by Iran, Russia-influenced states and Pakistan. None can be relied upon to fully support a land force. So, the only alternative is this new type of war, using the same methods the Chechens use in fighting Russia and the Afghans employed in defeating the Soviet invasion in the '80s. We live in a world where the term "world-war" is taking on a different meaning.

Bert Hielema also writes a weekly column for the Belleville daily.

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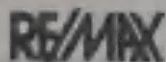
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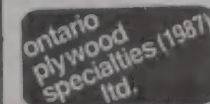
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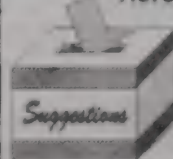
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Classifieds

Classified Rates	Anniversaries		Obituaries	
<p>As of May 1999: Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below</p> <p>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION <i>Christian Courier</i> is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, nine business days prior to publication.</p> <p>RATES All personal and family announcements: \$16.00 per column inch (pci) + GST (columns are two inches wide). Display advertising re: businesses and organizations: minimum \$18.20 pci + GST, depending on design and frequency.</p> <p>PHOTOS There is a processing fee of \$25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.</p> <p>PERSONAL ADS <i>Christian Courier</i> would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at \$16 pci per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS We offer a \$25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in <i>Christian Courier</i> and to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.</p> <p>SUBMITTING YOUR AD mail: <i>Christian Courier</i> #4 - 261 Martindale Road St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 fax: 905-682-8313 email: ceadpromo@aol.com</p> <p>OTHER INFORMATION a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. And editing style. b) Please provide us with clear copy. <i>Christian Courier</i> is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.</p>	<p>1951 October 29 2001 "For the Lord is good and His love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations." (Ps. 100:5) With praise and thanksgiving to God, we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents DIRK and DIEN VAN KAMPEN (nee Linker) May the Lord continue to bless you. With love from your family. Janet & John Schinkel — London, Ont. Christopher, Jennifer, Elizabeth, Amanda John & Jacqueline Van Kampen — Edmonton, Alta. Jessica, Jason, Jeremy Anita & Dean Hinchcliffe — Corunna, Ont. Derek, Lindsay You are invited to help us celebrate this special occasion on Saturday, October 27, 2001 D.V. at the Cornerstone United Reformed Church, London (180 Waterloo St.) Open House from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Home address: 100 Champlain Cres., London, ON N5V 1H1</p> <p>1951 October 26 2001 We are pleased to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents CLARENCE and JENNIE VISSER (nee Nicolai) May you continue to experience the Lord's blessing in your lives. Love and congratulations from: Doug & Evelyn Visser — Edmonton, Alta. Wendell, Janelle, Kevin Wes & Jeannie Visser — Edmonton, Alta. Nola-Rose, Peter, Sienna, McLean Joanne Visser — Edmonton, Alta. Gordon & Annette Visser — Edmonton, Alta. Matthew, Sarah Sharon & Peter Nolan — Fort Saskatchewan, Alta. Jenie, Joe, Maggie, Nataya David & Bonnie Visser — Fort Saskatchewan, Alta. Chelsea, Joshua, Aaron An Open House will be held at the Edmonton Croatian Soccer Club (2146 Fort Road) on October 27, 2001 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Your presence will be a gift to them. Best wishes can be sent to: RR 6, Box 173, Edmonton, AB T5B 4K3</p>	<p>Nieuwe Pekela, Gr Brampton the Neth. Ontario December 2, 1902 - August 25, 2001 Our dear father, grandpa and great-grandpa WALTER GEORGE HORLINGS passed on peacefully to be forever with his Lord and Saviour on August 25, 2001. "I shall behold Him face to face." Predeceased by his beloved wife of 56 years, Hettie Flach-Horlings, in 1995, and his son Frank in 1997. A tender loving and caring father, he is gratefully remembered and sadly missed by his children Joan & Peter Schaafsma — Brampton, Ont. Tom & Helen Horlings — Willowdale, Ont. Elsie & John Kuipers — Grandville, Mich. Frank(t) & Betty-Anne Horlings — Bradford, Ont. Walt & Nance Horlings — Plymouth, Mich. and by his 10 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. He is survived by his dear sister Cathern Hagen of Holland Christian Homes and by many nephews and nieces. A memorial service, led by Rev. J. Kuntz and Rev. H. Praamsma, was held on August 31, 2001 at Holland Christian Homes. Correspondence address: Joan Schaafsma, 1 Gervais Dr., Brampton, ON L6Y 2V3</p> <p>On September 1, 2001, in her 92nd year, our heavenly Father in His wisdom and own good time took to His eternal home. His servant, our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, MARIA KOOPS (nee Lamberts) All her children were around her bed when she exchanged the temporal for the eternal. We loved her deeply and thank God for allowing us to have a godly mother for so many years. Jesus was both Mom's Saviour and example. We are assured of seeing her again at the great wedding feast of the Lamb. Her husband Jan predeceased her on August 29, 1990 and a granddaughter, Karen Sol, in 1985. Loving mother of Ralph & Anne Koops — Cambridge, Ont. Jeffrey & Christine, Alex, Derek, Randall & Jennifer, Devin, Dylan, Marsha & Glen, Joel & Eva, Brendan Hazel & Andrew Siderus — Brampton, Ont. Marvin, Mark & Sharon, Esther, Maria Anne & Al Vander Ziel — Two Harbors, Minn. Don Wilma & Clarence Sol — Kitchener, Ont. Kevin & Tamara, Sydney, Taylor, Sherrie & John, Amadore, Chiara, Dwayne & Carrie, Wesley, Ryan Harry & Beth — Grand Rapids, Mich. John The funeral service was held on September 4, 2001 at Covenant Christian Reformed Church, Woodstock, Ont. with Pastor John Zantigh officiating. Correspondence address: 32 Sunset Blvd., Brampton, ON L6X 1W9</p>	<p>MARTEN HEIDINGA May 21, 1920 - September 28, 2001 "Praise the Lord, O my soul, all my inmost being, praise his holy name." (Psalm 103:1) Marten was a loving father, Pake and brother, a man of integrity and sound advice. His trust rested in the compassion and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he knew personally and spoke of freely. He enjoyed his daily work: building bridges, churches, pumping stations and sewage treatment plants. He gave time, talent and financial support to the church and to Christian organizations. He loved to laugh and had a great sense of humour. He wasn't a perfect man, but he never pretended to be. When he lost his temper or did wrong, he was humble enough to acknowledge it and ask forgiveness. He sought to follow Jesus.</p> <p>His final years were a summary of the kind of man he had always tried to be. He did not complain or ask for much. He always wanted to share everything that he received. He often thanked us for what we did for him. He loved to sing the Psalms and hymns and later, to mark their rhythm with his hands. He loved to listen to the scriptures. His heart was soft before the Lord. One of his last spoken prayers was "Lord, if you want me to go anywhere or help anyone, or do anything for you — I'm willing. In moments of suffering Marten would say, "You are the Shepherd and what you do is all right with me." In his weakness, we saw his true strength.</p> <p>Eventually, he could no longer remember our names without help, but he did not forget the name of Jesus. And what is more important — Jesus did not forget Marten's name.</p> <p>On Friday, September 28, 2001, at 2:55 a.m., when Dad's work here was fully done, he held out his hands to Jesus and the Good Shepherd came to lead home, to heaven, his friend Marten Heidinga. On earth we will greatly miss him. His wife Wylske (Vicky) Heidinga Children and grandchildren Anntia & Derk Maat Derek & Heather, Marya & Greg, Justin Jim & Coby Heidinga Cathy & Dave, Ryan and friend Rachel, Daniel, Adam John & Kay Heidinga Anna & Shawn, Martin, James & Allyson, Michelle Henry & Melinda Heidinga Matthew, Steve and six great-grandchildren Brothers and sisters and their families in Canada and the Netherlands. Memorial service was held on October 1, 2001, at Holland Christian Homes. We wish to thank all those who participated in his care and blessed his life and family at his passing. Correspondence address: Mrs. M. Heidinga, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S. Holland Christian Homes, P.T. 1209, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7</p>	<p>Suddenly taken into glory, on August 31, 2001 GERLOF (GERRY) NUMAN in his 58th year. Beloved husband of Christine Numan-Vander Vecht Dear father of: Kim & Steve Reitsma Janice & Steve Bontius Lisa & Peter Moelker David & Crystle Numan and grandfather of seven grandchildren Loved brother of Leida & Dan Van Beilen, Ena & Dick Mostert, Ralph & Klara Numan, Henry & Aileen Numan, Fred & Hillie Numan. Correspondence address: 48 Maple Leaf Circle, Brampton ON L6Y 4M4</p> <p>Aalten, the Neth. Burlington, Ont. April 30, 1936 - September 19, 2001 "The Lord is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear?" (Ps. 27:1) Suddenly, at the age of 65, WILLIAM (BILL) teBRAKE left this earth to be with his and our Lord and Saviour. He will be greatly missed by: Alice teBrake (nee Visscher), his wife for 41 years Loving father and Opa to: Jane & Gerald Visser — Barrie Jennifer, Amy Gerry & Sonya teBrake — Burlington Rebecca, Joshua, Emily, Leah, Hannah, Victoria, David Marlene & J.P. Hoekstra — Burlington Sarah, Stephanie, Peter, Matthew Jim & Melinda teBrake — Ottawa Brandon, Julianna, Lauren Bill was a dear brother, brother-in-law and uncle to many. He also leaves behind a caring church family, where he had the privilege of serving as elder. Pastor Kevin DeRaaf conducted the funeral service at Faith Christian Reformed Church, Burlington, on September 22, 2001. Correspondence address: 4473 Guelph Line, RR 2, Milton, ON L9T 2X6</p> <p>May 30, 1916 - September 21, 2001 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saint (Psalm 116:15) On September 21, 2001 the Lord took into His eternal glory JAN (JOHN) TON in his 86th year. He was the beloved husband of Thea (de Boer) who predeceased him on December 8, 1996. Dear father of: Gerald & Carol Ton — Brantford, Ont. Jeanette & Jim Knight — Hamilton, Ont. Loving Opa of five grandchildren. Fond brother-in-law of Andries & Dorothy Brouwer of Ancaster, Ont. Also survived by one brother and two sisters in the Netherlands. The funeral ceremony was held on September 25, 2001 in Ancaster, Ont. the Rev. G.Ph. van Popta officiating.</p>
<p>Wedding</p> <p>ROORDA-JONKER: With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, Jake & Sally Roorda and Arend Lohr & Jo-Anne Jonker-Lohr (and the late John Jonker) are pleased to announce the wedding celebration of their children Cheryl Jane and Reuben John The wedding will take place D.V. on Friday, October 19, 2001 at 6:00 p.m. at the Community Christian Reformed Church, Kitchener, Ont., Rev. Darren Roorda officiating. Mailing address: 84 Woodview Crescent, Kitchener ON N2A 3E3</p>	<p>Singing Lessons</p> <p>Singing Lessons Available Learn how to treat your voice with care and improve your singing skills. Exams, theory, beginners welcome. Flexible lesson times. Call: Charlene Flikkema 905-935-6597</p>			
<p>Personal</p> <p>Christian man, mid 40s, would like to meet a Christian lady. Please send letters to File #2724 c/o <i>Christian Courier</i>, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p>			<p>Call Christian Courier today to place your family ad: 1-800-969-4838.</p>	<p>PICTURE THIS! You can advertise in <i>Christian Courier's</i> Business and Service Directory once a month for only: \$25.00 + GST</p>

Classifieds

Obituary	For Sale	Job Opportunities	
<p>"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." (Psalm 91:1)</p> <p>Meppel, Prince George, the Neth. Canada March 16, 1924 - September 16, 2001 ANNIUS VAN DRIESUM</p> <p>Loving and devoted husband, father and grandfather of: Jane van Driesum-Meyer — Prince George, B.C. Alice & Allan Smit — Prince George, B.C. Rolf & Joan van Driesum (Hildebrand) — Prince George, B.C. Ben, Aaron, Alicia, Kaylyn John & Liz van Driesum (Miller) — Victoria, B.C. Alexander, Jonah David & Mary van Driesum (MacLeod) — Edmonton, Alta. Emily, Alison</p> <p>A service of celebration and remembrance was held on September 19, 2001, at the Christian Reformed Church, Prince George, B.C. Donations can be made to Hope International or the John Howard Society.</p>	<p>SJOELBAKKEN: Koomans quality shuffleboards. Heavy duty, hardwood, 30 puck built in storage. \$150 Can., \$130 US. shipping included. Order from: W. Noordam, 42 Queensway Dr., Chatham, ON N7M 4G4 Tel. 519-354-6463, 519-351-7667</p>	<p>Jarvis Christian Reformed Church is in need of a CARETAKER to start immediately. Benefit package and house available. Please send resume and/or inquires to: Ebenezer CRC, Attention: Mr. John Kloet Jr. Box 239, Jarvis ON N0A 1J0 For more info, call John Kloet at: 519-587-4046.</p>	<p>DORDT COLLEGE FACULTY POSITIONS</p> <p> Dordt College is seeking applications for openings beginning 2002-2003 in the following areas:</p>
	<p>For Rent</p>		<p>Communication Education (Two positions) Introduction, upper-level (elementary and secondary methods), special education Foreign Language Spanish Physical Science/Astronomy/Earth Science Social Work (Two Positions) Generalist: micro-practice background; methods courses & field practice Theatre Arts Theatre generalist Theology General education courses in biblical theology and upper level biblical studies courses</p>
<p>Job Opportunity</p>	<p>Event</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p>	<p>Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae/resume to:</p> <p>Dr. Rockne McCarthy Facsimile: 712-722-4496 Vice President for Academic Affairs E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu Dordt College Web Site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff 498 4th Avenue NE Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697</p>
<p>CHURCH CARETAKER</p> <p>This position would require approximately 25 hours of work per week on average. Duties include cleaning the facilities as well as opening and closing the building for events. The successful applicant must comply with the Abuse Policy of the church. Currently there is a home available for the caretaker's use and is part of the remuneration package. However, terms and conditions of the contract can be negotiated. Interested parties should contact: Immanuel Christian Reformed Church of Brampton 63 Church St. East, Brampton ON L6V 1G1 Fax: 905-451-8137 or e-mail: immanuel@axxent.ca Attn.: Administration Committee</p>	<p>Church News</p>	<p>Church Anniversary</p>	
<p>Sandy Hill Stock Farms in Taber, Alberta, requires a full-time pen-checker. Duties will include daily pen checking, treating and processing. It also includes any maintenance, cleaning and seasonal building projects. Welding and rough wood work skills an asset. Hourly wage will depend on experience and ability. Fax resume to 403-223-4488. Phone 403-223-8800</p>	<p>Westmount Christian Reformed Church, 405 Drury Lane, Strathroy, ON N6G 3G2. Council info.: Chairman: Gary Aalbers 519-245-5803; Clerk: Pete Plaisier 519-245-3413; Church office: 519-245-2430; Pastor Fred VanderBerg: Office 519-245-6342</p>	<p>On November 24 and 25, 2001, the Christian Reformed Church of Stratford will be celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness. All former members and friends are urged to celebrate with us. Join us Saturday for Open House, dinner and program; Sunday for a special worship service. For dinner tickets or more details call Betty DeWeerd 519-393-6116 or e-mail: stratfordcrc@quadro.net</p>	
<p>Community CRC of Frankford, Ont. is seeking an ordained, full-time pastor whose gifts include sound Biblical preaching, pastoral care and youth ministry. Our congregation of approximately 50 families is part of a small rural community, located on the Trent River. If interested, please contact: Tina Hoftzyer, 536 Ninth Murray Rd., RR 1, Frankford, ON K0K 2C0, or call 613-398-6834; fax 613-398-1710</p>	<p>Job Opportunity</p>	<p>DIACONAL MINISTRIES CANADA A ministry supporting deacons in Christian Reformed Churches in Canada requires a Regional Trainer (Western Canada) to provide leadership and diaconal training for deacons. We also require a Project Developer (Eastern Canada) and a Project Developer (Western Canada) to assist Christian groups in establishing new ministries that work with the poor. The selected candidates will have a passion to work with the poor, along with administrative, community and organizational development skills. These are 1-2 day per week positions.</p> <p></p> <p>Send resumes by Oct. 30, 2001 to dmc@crcna.ca or fax: (905) 336-8344. (Attn: Madeline Robins)</p>	<p>Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.</p>
<p>Miscellaneous</p>	<p>EnviroFacts...</p>	<p>(NC)—Ozone is a colourless gas that is a chemical cousin of molecular oxygen. Most of the ozone in the atmosphere is found in a layer between 15 and 35 kilometers above the earth's atmosphere known as the stratosphere. The ozone layer is beneficial to life on earth as it absorbs ultraviolet rays. In contrast, ozone at ground level can be harmful to living organisms. Most ozone at ground level is formed as urban air pollutants mix together on hot summer days, becoming a principal component of smog.</p> <p>— News Canada</p>	<p>DIRECTOR OF MUSIC (Half-Time)</p> <p>Willowdale CRC, located in North Toronto, is seeking a Part Time Music Director. Our church is looking for an individual for a variety of tasks, including, but not limited to, accompanying worship services on organ/piano, leading in the teaching of new songs, leading a choir and/or Praise Team, working with young church members to encourage development and use of their musical talents, and introducing new musical dimensions to our worship services in the Reformed faith tradition. Applicants must feel called to music as a ministry, be knowledgeable of church music repertoire, be flexible in music styles and be willing to be a team player. Individuals with these qualities combined with a heart for worship and a passion for using music to enhance the worship of the Lord, are encouraged to send their resume to:</p> <p>Willowdale Christian Reformed Church Search Committee Attn: Jack Van Meggelen 70 Hilda Avenue, Toronto ON M2M 1V5</p>
<p>GRONINGERS: Did you know there is a web-site for you? Check out: dideldom.com</p>			

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

The Board of Directors (BOD) of the Ontario Christian School Teachers' Association (OCSTA) invites applications for the position of

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The current Executive Director is retiring, D.V. as of July 31, 2002.

The Executive Director reports directly to the BOD but is expected to be the catalyst and prime mover for seven standing committees, associated agencies, related organizations, the OCSTA office and the seven hundred OCSTA members.

The BOD has determined that the OCSTA office will continue to be located in Ancaster, Ontario. The BOD has also determined that expectations of the current Executive Director exceed full-time and that some assistance is warranted for the position.

The BOD is interested in hearing from persons who have a proven reforming perspective of Christian education; who have a range of teaching/administrative training and experience in Christian schooling; who are articulate, motivated, visionary and self-starters.

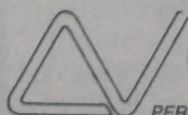
You are cordially invited to discuss details with our current Executive Director, Hank Hultink, at 905-648-1200 or e-mail: ocsta@netcom.ca

Interested applicants should direct their data (C.V., including completed references from three sources) to:

OCSTA Executive Director Search Committee
777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4

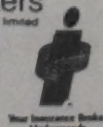
Applications for the position will be received until December 31, 2001. It is anticipated that the position will be awarded, D.V. by about mid February 2002.

Miscellaneous



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John Kalverda, Executive Director
Holland Christian Homes Inc.
7900 McLaughlin Rd. South
Brampton ON L6Y 5A7
Phone 905-463-7002 ext. 227 Fax 905-459-8667

NEW PART-TIME MUSIC COORDINATOR POSITION AVAILABLE

The First CRC of Chilliwack, on the eastern side of the scenic Fraser Valley in B.C., is in immediate need of a person to help us in our music ministries. We're looking for an active and spiritually mature person with the gifts, skills and desire to lead us in our music ministry. The successful applicant will have the desire to encourage and train our members with musical gifts in the use of those gifts for the praise of God. For a full position description or more information, please call us at 604-792-2517, fax us at 604-792-2538, or e-mail us at firstcrc@uniserve.com

Applications may be sent to:

Music Search Committee
9800 McNaught Rd. Chilliwack, BC V2P 6G2

Miscellaneous

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Teachers

BRAMPTON, ONT.:

John Knox Christian School in Brampton, Ont. has a full-time vacancy in Grade 4 because of a pregnancy/parenting leave, beginning January 2002.

Please direct inquiries and resumes to:
Hilda Roukema, Principal
82 McLaughlin Rd. South,
Brampton, ON L6Y 2C7
Phone: 905-451-3238,
Fax: 905-451-3448
E-mail:
hroukema@bramptonjkcs.org

LACOMBE, ALTA.:

Lacombe Christian School, approximately 379 students in K-9, located in central Alberta, invites applications from qualified teachers for a home room Grade 8/French position. This position is a maternity leave position starting in November. Applicants must qualify for Alberta Teacher Certification. Please send resume to:

Martin Folkerts, Principal
Lacombe Christian School, 5206
58 Street, Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9.
Phone: 403-782-6531,
Fax: 403-782-5760.

TABER, ALTA.:

Taber Christian School TEACHING PRINCIPAL

We are seeking a leader with a commitment to Jesus Christ for an interdenominational K-9 school with an enrolment of 130 students, beginning September 2002. Applicants should have a commitment for a reformed world life-view of Christian education and have administrative and team building abilities. If you would like to join our three-campus society in providing high-quality Christian education, please reply to Mrs. Marilyn Visser, 4809 60 Ave, Taber, AB T1G 1E9 or e-mail: principal@ta.monarch.net

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Event

MACS PRESENTS:

**"Harvest Moon Christian
Singles Social"**

**Saturday, October 27,
2001 at 8 p.m.**

**St. Christophers Anglican
Church**

662 Guelph Line Burlington

Info: Sandra 905-388-7387

Sue 905-765-5543

**Tickets available at the door
for \$15.**

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- Oct. 13 Calvin Chr. School, Hamilton, dedication new building. 10:30 a.m. For info.: Geraldine 905-388-2645
- Oct. 17 Same Recital Christ Church Cathedral, Ottawa, Ont. 8 p.m. Info. 613-224-1597
- Oct. 18 Same Recital St. Peter's Anglican Church, Brockville, Ont. Info. 613-224-1597
- Oct. 19 Same Recital Trinity St. Andrew's United Church, Renfrew, Ont. Info. 613-224-1597
- Oct. 20 Liberation Choir, Hamilton, Ont. 8 p.m., Christ's Church Cathedral, 252 James St. N.
- Oct. 20 A Day of Encouragement. Training for deacons, elders, caregivers and outreach ministry planners at Hamilton District Chr. High School, Ancaster, Ont. Theme Open Doors, featuring 50 workshops. See ad.
- Oct. 26 Repeat Performance on Vision TV, celebration at Hamilton Place of 25th Anniversary Canadian Christian Education Foundation; 1000 voice student choir etc., 9 p.m. ET; 6 p.m. PT. See ad in this issue.
- Oct. 26 Concert Organ André Knevel, Sander Van Marion, Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont. 8 p.m.
- Nov. 2 Christian Festival Concert, direction Leendert Kooij, Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto. Call 416-636-9779
- Nov. 6 2001 Annual Church & Law Seminar, Bramalea Baptist Church, Bramalea located in Greater Toronto. Theme: "Ten Hot Topics for Churches and Religious Charities". Registration forms at www.charitylaw.ca and the host, Carter & Associates, 519-942-0001, fax: 519-942-0300; e-mail: seminars@charitylaw.ca
- Nov. 9 Concert Clinton CRC, 7:30 p.m. Laurens Kaldewey, organ; Blyth Fest. Orchestra; Ron Greidanus, piano; Men of Note. Call 519-482-5372
- Nov. 10 The Lighthouse Christian Community Centre Annual International Dinner and Silent Auction, at Buffet King, 401 & Warden, Scarborough, Ont. Call the Lighthouse at 416-535-6262 for reservations.
- Nov. 16 Benefit Concert Durham Christian Homes, Hebron CRC, Whitby, Ont. See ad in classifieds.
- Nov. 23 Liberation Choir, Orangeville, Ont. 8 p.m., Orangeville Can. Ref. Church, 55 C-Line.
- Nov. 23 Music in the Valley presents: Pipes and Praise with Dr. John Vandertuin at St. Paul's United Church, 29 Park St., Dundas, Ont. at 8 p.m. Phone 905-628-6396. Tickets: Adults \$15, Students \$10, available from the church.
- Nov. 24 Liberation Choir, London, Ont. 8 p.m., St. Paul's Cathedral, 472 Richmond St.
- Information for all Liberation Choir concerts: 905-457-2348
- Nov. 24-25 Stratford CRC Celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness. Info 519-393-6116; stratfordcra@quadro.net
- Dec. 8 Mountainview concert, Grimsby. André Knevel, organ, flute, Stephanie Scholman, violin, Hosanna Choir.
- Dec. 15 Can. Chr. Education Foundation. Repeat performance VISION TV broadcasting. See ad in this issue.
- April 21, 2002 Calgary 1st CRC 50th Anniv. Former members welcome. For info. 403-243-2244 celebr8fifty@aol.com

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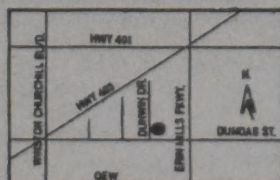
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News

Pakistan's Christians appeal to U.S.

C. Hope Flinchbaugh

LAHORE, Pakistan (ANS) — While anti-American and anti-Christian rhetoric is intensifying among Middle East Muslim extremists, a leading voice for Pakistan's non-Muslim minorities, Shahbaz Bhatti, has pledged full support to joining the United States in the international coalition against terrorism. The 33-year-old Bhatti is president of Christian Liberation Front Pakistan (CLFP), the largest human rights organization within Pakistan with more than 50,000 members and thousands of outside supporters who are struggling to promote peace in Pakistan's Muslim majority country of 143 million.

Bhatti told ASSIST NEWS, "CLFP believes in tolerance, peace and respect for humanity. We are with the American government and the American people in their war against terrorism." Bhatti, who holds a Masters Degree in both Public Administration and Political Science, fears that after a forthcoming attack on Afghanistan, Muslim militants equipped with modern weapons will target the poor Christian populace with the possibility of ferocious assaults on churches and schools as well.

Christians will be a target

Bhatti said, "The Christians of Pakistan will be a direct target of terrorist forces who will prey upon us in the name of religion."

For this reason Bhatti has made the following appeal to governments and Christian organizations who are joining the international coalition against terrorism:

- 1) That in order to ensure protection to the Christian Church buildings and institutions in Pakistan, we may be provided co-operation.
- 2) That after the attack on terrorists in Afghanistan, arrangements should be made to protect the Christian masses of Pakistan from expected genocide, threatened to be carried out by the fanatic Muslim militants.
- 3) That guidance be provided for crisis management so that precautionary measures could be adopted to reduce the losses.
- 4) That authorities in the government of Pakistan be asked to take special measures so that Christian pockets and Churches be specially guarded by the government agencies.
- 5) That Christians in the West and in the East should exhibit more solidarity so that Jesus Christ our Savior be glorified in all circumstances. In lieu of the threats against Pakistan's Christian minorities after the terrorist attacks on the United States CLFP is



KAY MULDOON, MEYERS PHOTO-ART

A field worker in Pakistan. Pakistan's Christian women are considered the lowest class of the community, forced to take the lowest jobs which includes cleaning waste from houses and cattle stalls.

currently establishing a hotline for religious minorities. Through this hotline, any non-Muslim who is in trouble and being persecuted can reach quickly for help and support.

Although the United States is just awakening to the alarming effects of terrorism in the name of religion, Pakistani Christians, Hindus, Parsees, Sikhs, Ahmedis, and some moderate liberal Muslims have endured Muslim Extremist threats more than 20 years.

The lowest class

Pakistan's Christian women are considered the lowest class of the community, forced to take the lowest jobs which includes cleaning waste from houses and cattle stalls. Numerous reports confirm that Christian women are often kidnapped by their Muslim employers, raped, and forced to convert to Islam.

If the husbands or fathers of the victims protest against the crimes, the culprits and their militant Muslim colleagues threaten their lives and their families' lives. A number of Christians have been imprisoned for violating Pakistan's blasphemy law, which bans defamatory comments about Mohammed, Islam, or the Qur'an.

About CLFP

Founded in 1988, CLFP currently has nine people on staff who are working together in several Pakistani cities to organize

assemblies, study groups, peaceful demonstrations against the blasphemy law and plead the specific cases of religious minorities in court.

International Christian Concern (ICC), an interdenominational religious human rights organization in Washington DC, is assisting CLFP in its struggle for the persecuted Christians of Pakistan and continually supporting the victims. CLFP gives free legal assistance and often sanctuary to many persecuted Christians and members of other religious minorities who are victimized and targeted due to their faith.

In 1993, CLFP pleaded the case of Anwar Masih from Sumandry charged under 295C (blasphemy law) and later acquitted.

Heartwrenching cases

CLFP also pleaded the case and launched a campaign for blasphemy prisoners, i.e., Manzoor Masih, Rehmat Masih, Slammat Masih, Gul Masih, Ranjha Masih, Shafiq Masih, Pervaz Masih from Sialkot, and Ayub Masih who received the death sentence from Lahore high court. (Please note that "Masih" is not a last name but the caste name which, interpreted, means "Messiah.")

The most recent heart wrenching cases were from Christian women and their families who called Bhatti to help them. In May 2000, Bhatti was called to help

eight Christian women, seven of them teenagers, who were gang-raped by their employers after their van was forced off the road as they drove home from their jobs at a stitching factory in Lahore. The Muslim women in the van were left unharmed. CLFP helped the women file charges against the accused and financed lawyers for the women's court case, which is still ongoing.

Christianity Today reports that in February 2001, 14-year-old Christian Naira Nadia was kidnapped by eight men, raped, forced to convert to Islam and marry one of the men, the father of one of her school friends. Naira's parents were frantic when Maqsood Ahmed, Naira's captor, left his own family and took Naira into hiding with him.

Dodging threats, bullets

Although American-based ICC has helped Bhatti hire military police to search for her and her captor, the girl has still not been found. In the last 15 years, Bhatti himself became a living target, dodging threats and even bullets from Muslim extremists in Pakistan. Bhatti told *Charisma* magazine (November 2000 issue), "During those attacks on my life, I did not use a gun or take any gun with me. I only believe in God's Spirit and God's power. He's guiding me, giving me courage, giving me wisdom and showing me the right way."

Sympathy for Americans

After the attack on America, Bhatti told ASSIST News, "CLFP wishes to offer sincerest sympathies and condolences to all those personally impacted by indescribable tragic events that took place on September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington D.C. Words cannot express the shock that we felt. Our prayers are with all the victims who died, that the Almighty Lord may give them peace and a place in heaven and may God give their families the strength to bear this sudden shock. Only God Almighty can heal up their wounds."

Anyone wishing to give financially to help religious minorities in Pakistan may contact International Christian Concern (ICC) at: Address: International Christian Concern, 2020 Pennsylvania Avenue NW #941, Washington, DC 20006 E-mail address: ICC@persecution.org; Phone: 1-800-ICC-5441 Web site: <http://www.persecution.org/>

News Digest

Schooldaze

KARLSTAD, Sweden — A 106-year-old has been sent a notice to attend a pre-primary school in Sweden. Olga Dahl, born in 1895, got a letter from the local education board in Karlstad, after a mix up with her national identification number. A computer error registered Dahl as six, not 106, reports *Ananova*.

Dahl received the standard letter all Swedish children receive before their sixth birthday, informing them of the school they will be expected to attend.

She told Swedish television news, "It would be interesting to see what the schools are like nowadays. It must be better than when I went to school; the teachers used to hit us on our knuckles with a ruler when we didn't know the answer. But even if I wanted to go, I would not be able to because I can't read or hear very well."

Luxury parking

GLASGOW, Scotland — A man wants to sell his car parking space in Glasgow for £11,000. Derek Williamson says the Merchant City apartment block space is worth more than the price of an average small family car, reports the *Daily Record*. Williamson bought the space from a London businessman for the same amount two years ago. His real estate agents are prepared to take offers of £10,995 and above. They say a lack of parking and new housing developments are increasing demand. A spokesperson for the agents said: "Car parking spaces are never going to lose money and they are going to keep soaring because nobody wants to leave their car on the street and risk a parking ticket." Williamson told the *Daily Record*: "I really think it is worth the money because there are so many traffic wardens in the city that you can't leave your car anywhere."

Cell-phone symphony

AUSTRIA — American composer Golan Levin has written a symphony for cell-phones, reports the *Globe and Mail*. *Dialtones: A Telesymphony* had its inaugural performance in September in Austria. The audience is also the orchestra. Their mobile phones are given new ring tones, and their phone numbers are logged into a computer. In a stunning crescendo, as many as 200 phones peal simultaneously.